

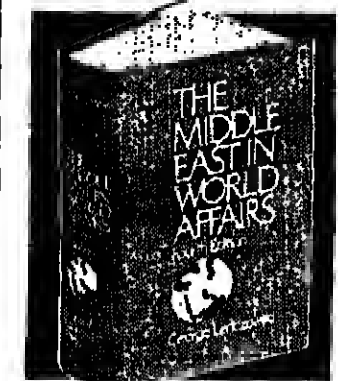




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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

SEPTEMBER 4 1981

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## On pain of retribution

By Richard Gombrich

WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY  
(Editor):  
Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions  
342pp. University of California Press, £16.50.  
0 520 03923 8

In her sprightly introduction, Wendy O'Flaherty calls this book "all you wanted to know about karma and never dared (bothered?) to ask." It is a major contribution to Indology, but not an easy introduction to the subject. It results from two conferences on karma organized for scholars working in America by Karl Potter, though of the twelve contributors only he, the editor and P. S. Jaini attended both conferences, and three attended neither. All twelve articles are extremely informative. Lest it escape attention, being near the end of the book and formidably footnoted, let me single out the chapter by Wilhelm Halbfass, who in covering a wide range of the intellectual problems which the karma theory set for philosophers has selected extremely interesting material. Moreover, even though his article is hardly for non-specialists, its introduction offers the nearest thing to a general historical introduction to the subject in the book, and so is a good place to begin. To get a clear account of the main theory one should then turn to Professor Potter's article. For all its interest the editor's chapter, since it deals with exceptions to that theory, is not well placed at the beginning of the book.

The chapters range in clarity from the superbly lucid papers by Potter and Jaini to that by William Stabile on "The Medical Soteriology of Karma in Buddhist Tantra", which I might have found easier in the original Tibetan. (I do not know Tibetan.) The preface which the editor shares with Stabile for "the methodology of oppositions" pushes part of her contribution close to his on the obfuscation index.

The book aims to show that the Indian theory of karma and rebirth is no simple unity. To this it succeeds - perhaps too well, for there is no contribution which adequately locates the wood before we begin to examine the trees. Thus the reviewer

must rush in where the contributors have learnt not to tread, and rashly hazard a summary. Karma is a theory of cosmic justice - a statement too bald to appear in this book. The theory deals with the whole problem area of causation in human affairs, and hence with moral responsibility, free will and apparently undeserved suffering; it thus concerns the nature of God (if any), the soul (if any) and what happens after death. The theory holds that all intentional acts (and sometimes others too) are good or bad, and entail correspondingly pleasant or painful results for the agent. Evidently people do not always get their deserts in this life; but the theory posits rebirth in an endless series of states which range from heavens through various conditions on earth (from Brahmin to bug or lower) down to hells. As Potter says, the theory "is not in principle untestable, though in practice it is because of technical difficulties."

I suppose that in this crucial area of concern all societies harbour a wide range of ideas, some of them logically incompatible, and that individuals tend to choose those ideas which answer to the needs of the moment. Examples from our own society abound: just now there is fierce controversy about assigning responsibility for looting shops to the looters, to their parents, to the police, to "society", to television, to "false consciousness", etc. Wise words on karma were written by David Pocock in *Mind, Body and Wealth*:

Re-birth is primarily for other people. Just as few Westerners accept fully the finiteness of their own existence, so that death tends to be thought of as something that happens to others, so the Gujarati peasants when they speak of themselves as individuals conceive of a hell or some sort of heaven. It is when they speak of others, when they are looking for some wider theory to explain the... misfortune of others, that they have recourse to the theory of re-birth. Certainly they do not deny salvation to others, equally they apply the re-birth theory to their own occasional griefs but primarily the emphases are as I have described

... The belief in some kind of eternal salvation relates to the future whereas the belief in re-birth relates to the past.

Thus the two aspects of karma, the active ("do as you would be done by") and the passive ("be done by as you did") have different uses and resonances. Since the theory is that the universe is ultimately just, it makes no sense unless the retribution comes to the original agent. In myth, ritual and popular parlance there are plenty of exceptions stated or inferred, but these can be satisfactorily interpreted as efforts to temper justice with mercy, morally by using older ideas which have survived in the culture precisely because they are useful for that purpose. To speak, as Gerald Larson does in his eccentric coda to the book, of "the apparent anomaly between what might be called the 'transference of karma interpretation' and the 'non-transference of karma interpretation'" is to make awfully heavy weather of these inconsistencies.

In the oldest Indian texts, the Vedas and Brahmanas (c. 1500 - c. 700 ac), the dead normally go to heaven; there is no karma theory, but an ancestor in the next world may die again unless fed by his living descendants. The ancient funeral and commemorative rites, which centre on ancestor worship, still survive in Hindu practice, though based on conceptions incompatible with karma doctrine. Though the Sanskrit word *karma* means "act" in general, in a religious context it primarily meant a significant act, i.e. a ritual enjoined by the Veda. He who performed all prescribed acts could expect to join his ancestors in heaven.

As Obeyesekere's article reminds us, belief in rebirth is widespread among Indian tribes - as indeed elsewhere - and may well have joined the ideological mainstream from a tribal source. Combining the idea of continual rebirth with the brahminical doctrine of the necessary efficacy of prescribed acts (and ill effects of their omission or contraries) produced the classical karma doctrine. That doctrine first appears, unsystematically, in brahminical texts of about the seventh century ac. Obeyesekere argues that the karma eschatology is just the logical result

of ethicizing the rebirth eschatology, but I disagree for two reasons. Firstly, the karma doctrine appears with the idea that it is best to escape rebirth altogether; worldly merit will be rewarded, but that is far inferior to getting out of the whole system; indeed, most schools regard even meritorious acts as a positive hindrance to salvation. I cannot see that this is a logical corollary of the karma doctrine or of ethicization, and adhere to the older view that a profound mutaise arising from social change must have occasioned this wish to leave the world. Secondly, Obeyesekere himself shows that the Hindu version of the karma theory is not completely ethicized; far from it: failing to perform certain daily rites is as great a "sin" for a Hindu as, e.g. cruelty.

Full ethicization took place in Buddhism and Jainism. Both these religions arose in the sixth century ac as protest movements, denying the authority of the Veda and hence the efficacy of ritual. So for them karma was purely a matter of morality. Jainism is the religion which has paid the most attention to karma, devoting vast works to its description and classification. A Jain is so keen to attain salvation by abstaining from all action that his ideal end is self-starvation. For Jains doing involves murder, for they are hylolistic and attribute both life and moral agency to everything. Hindus, with rare exceptions, ondo plants with souls; Buddhists do not, stopping short at what we too would consider animate objects (including spirits).

All the early thinkers, whether Jain, Buddhist or Hindu, saw the operation of karma as automatic, a law of nature. So how does it work? The Jains hold karma to be a kind of dust which sticks to the soul. Buddhists and early Hindu philosophers, admirably expounded here by McDermott, Potter and Halbfass, answered in terms of dispositions. Since Buddhists deny the existence of a soul, their emphasis is on a causal sequence of moral events. The next question is what gets reborn. Having denied the potential vehicle for karmic residues, the Buddhists posit a continuum of moments of consciousness, each determined by the last; the last conscious moment

of life in one organism determines the first in an embryo or non-mammalian form of life. Jains again have the most straightforward solution: the soul is coterminous with the body and is adaptable in extent like a foldable cloth. Their only problem is to get the soul from one body to the next; in an appendix to Jaini's article a Jain agronomist suggests that it may be done by radio waves or by pheromones, the chemicals by the smell of which ants and bees communicate. Hindus leave the problem that their scriptures hold the soul to be omnipresent. Most schools postulate a "subtle body", a ghostly alter ego which flies from life to life and serves as the link between the soul and its phenomenal experiences.

This variety led to correspondingly varied theories of conception, and to the postulation or denial of states intermediate between one life and the next. The pure monists had the problem that they claimed to be merely expounding the statements in the late Vedic scriptures, which are not consistent; this led them (notably Sankara in the seventh century) to a complicated scheme of rebirth in which the link between action and result was guaranteed only by God. But by that time Hindu theism had in any case destroyed the logical cohesion of the karma theory.

Though *prima facie* every act has its consequence, all theorists saw that this raises problems. How is there time for every act to bear fruit? And if every detail of one's life is karmically determined, is there room for the free will necessary to generate fresh karma? The general view was that some karmic consequences are stronger than others and that karma determines only certain parameters of one's next life, chiefly station at birth and length of natural life-span, plus special cases of pleasure and pain for which common sense offers no convincing explanation. Michel Weiss writes on karma in a medical text; a disease may be cured by "human effort", but if it resists established remedies the patient's bad karma is evidently too strong. This text, like many others, identifies what men call fate with past karma, the passive aspect, and argues for the active corollary, human effort. The argument with fatal-

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ism has probably never ceased to be a live issue in Hindu culture. Bruce Long's article on the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, shows that characters in it often argue for fatalism in both theistic and atheistic forms and ascribe all responsibility variously to fate, time, death, an "Arranger", etc.

Must every act produce a result? Naturally people want to evade unpleasant consequences. Most forms of karma theory allow acts somehow to be cancelled out. Vedic ritualism already had oblations for faults. These ritual expiations (which Potter is wrong to say apply only to omens) are still important. The classical Hindu lawbooks which Ludo Rocher discusses devote much space to them and debate whether they apply to intentional or unintentional faults or both - which clearly shows that in some contexts a bad act (karma) is an "offence" rather than a "sin". Other ways of cancelling out bad acts mentioned in various sources are confession, remorse, and such good acts as Vedic study.

This is all piecemeal counteraction; but there is also a whole way of life devoted to negating one's karma. It is undertaken by the person - Hindu, Buddhist or Jain - who wishes to escape rebirth. He leaves society and formally renounces all his worldly obligations to lead a life of withdrawal, "burning out" past karma and creating no new karma by ever acting with a selfish motive. Jains and most Hindus believed that all one's former actions, good as well as bad, had to be systematically negated by meditation and austerities. Buddhists and other Hindus thought that by gaining salvific knowledge one might short-circuit the system and escape the results of all but the most heinous crimes. Hindus in the pure monistic tradition aim to realize that the world and its acts are illusory anyway, so that karma is made impertinent by gnosis; as we might say to a ghost, "I refuse to be scared of you - you don't exist."

This last attitude is prefigured in the most famous Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita* (third century BC). But the *Gita* is theistic and prescribes a compromise, God says that the man who wishes to escape rebirth should remain in the world and do the duties of his station, but make over the results to Him. "In this second-order attitude of non-attachment lies the key to liberation" (Potter). To this day sectarian Hin-

dus (monothists) dedicate the result of every act, in particular of every rite, to God.

Of course this is illogical. It reifies karma as if the results were credits and debits in a bank account. Buddhists did the same when they institutionalized the "transfer of merit", even though pundits saved doctrinal appearances by comparing merit transfer to lighting one lamp from another: the first does not lose what is "transferred".

The Buddhist transfer of merit probably originated in the funeral rites with which Wendy O'Flaherty begins the book. Indeed, only Jains (P. S. Jaini tells us) have had the rigour to deny all transfer of merit and completely abolish Hindu-type commemorative rites for the dead. No doubt people feel an overwhelming desire to do something for a newly dead parent and need to feel that their children will be able to do something for them. This explains why karma is transferred in this context, and indeed why when karma is said to be transferred at other times it usually passes in the family line: the interdependence of ancestors and descendants is a deep-seated feeling in the culture, as in so many others. Again in a ritual context, bad karma may be transferred to officiating priests, especially at mortuary rites.

But apart from transfer in the family line and specific ritual contexts, ideas that karma can be transferred so that someone else reaps what I have sown are in Hinduism, since O'Flaherty, very much the exception. Alleged cases must be closely scrutinized. "Group karma" may be just the coincidental karma of several individuals. McDermott's example, drawn from Buddhism, would also apply to some apparent Hindu transfers: "A fratricide could only be born of parents who because of their past karma deserved the suffering that results from the violent loss of a child, who in turn deserved to suffer such a death at the hands of his brother as a punishment for his own past deeds." Some of the myths O'Flaherty cites as instances of karma transference can be just as well explained in orthodox terms; be result from the narrator's freedom to select whatever theory best explains the present exigencies of his plot.

To transfer good karma to one's dead father or bad karma to the funeral priest is a very different thing

from transferring it to God, for God will not experience any results. We come now to the final subversion of the karma doctrine - and to this book's main deficiency. In the second half of the first millennium AD there arose in South India a new form of Hindu devotionism which gradually permeated India. Giving one's karma to God acquired a wholly new meaning. In the *Gita* one had to earn God's grace by good works. Now that grace was declared to be arbitrary. George Hart's article on "The Theory of Reincarnation among the Tamils" captures the point. In a Tamil poem God saves a man who has slept with his mother and murdered his brahmin father. The world of transmigration "is conceived not as an intricate mechanism for the recompense of one's acts, but rather as a nightmarish condition from which the only release is God. Nor can God be bought by action or even devotion. He acts in inscrutable ways... His grace is freely given."

Unfortunately Hart's article is not integrated with the rest of the book. (He was not at the conferences.) The theologian Ramanauja (eleventh century) brought this attitude into the mainstream of Hinduism and it is now the dominant religion of India. No one in this book asks the question, crucial for Indian thinking, just what is meant by being the agent of an act. Every Indian who learnt Sanskrit, the language of our sources, did so from Panini's grammar, which defines the agent as independent. In the earlier period of Hindu theism the soul is ultimately identical with God, at least in most respects, so that the individual can be a true agent: his agency and God's coincide, to the derogation of neither. In Ramanauja God transcends his devotees: He is master, they are slaves and own nothing. God is the only true agent. What we call "human effort" is just a form of God's power. Fatalism returns through a theistic backdoor.

The *Gita* compromise is uncommon in Hinduism today. Most Hindus either live in the world, try to do their duty, and conceive that their reward will be heaven (perhaps to be finally followed by rebirth); or they are (essentially monothistic) ascetics who hope that God will use his power to intervene and wipe out their bad karma - which is but His will in any case - and take them to His special heaven, quite a Christian sort of place.



"The Pump 1958", a wood engraving by George Mackley. See also page 111.

## Diverging upwards

John A. T. Robinson

WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH:  
*Towards a World Theology  
Faith and the Comparative History  
of Religion*  
206pp. Macmillan, £15.  
0 333 27605 1

Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *Meaning and End of Religion* was a landmark in the modern study of comparative religion, questioning the validity of speaking of "religions" in the plural, like Hinduism and Buddhism, as reified entities. He is here concerned with the history and theology of "religion in the singular". Indeed he tells us that he would like to write a history of religion, century by century, rather than "faith" by "faith" (this he claims is quite a modern usage). For no centuries are religions in the same way: we share a common interconnected history, and religions evolve, he believes, by continuous creation rather than by a series of "big bangs" of discrete revelations *ab extra*. This does not in any way deny their distinctiveness, nor the transcendent reality to which they are each responding. But the challenge of the present age is that mankind should become corporately and critically self-conscious of the convergent global continuum in which we all participate whatever our medium of response. And he presents a case for comparative religion as "the humane history of man", the study of "human lives at their most intimate, most profound, most primary, most transcendent".

It is a stretching and indeed exciting thesis. Professor Cantwell Smith is strongest, as he himself admits, when he is writing as a historian rather than as a theologian, and at his most lucid when being descriptive rather than analytical. His opening chapter, for instance, in which he traces the intricate history of the Baraitan and Josephat legend passing in and out of medieval Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam, makes fascinating reading. Yet as the argument proceeds it often seems to spiral and turn back on itself, with parentheticals and self-corrections that make the movement of the sentence, book to book, is lost. It is not a train; it begins as lectures at Birmingham University nearly ten years ago and perhaps has suffered from too much going over. Yet it is an important book.

The title is deliberately modest - "towards a world theology" - and the process is a bit like a game of grandmother's foot-steps. One is there without being sent back. Yet the goal is worth the pursuit. The day when we could be content with self-contained and compelling Christian theologies, Islamic theologies and the rest is over. Yet a world theology must be one of which "the religions" are the subject not the object of the study, as the human community in and through all its religious sub-communities participates in the self-understanding of "the faith-history of man".

Just as within the Church ecumenical theology done by a Presbyterian (as Cantwell Smith himself is) will transcend rather than dilute his particular form of faith, so to work towards a theology of comparative religion is to respect and draw out the reality that there is a "faith which saves" in many forms. It saves by delivering men and women from alienation, anomie, meaninglessness, and the rest, by offering the courage to suffer without despairing, to succeed without gloating, and giving them "their sense of belonging to a community, of accepting and being accepted, their ability to trust and be trusted, to discipline themselves, to formulate ideals, to postpone reward, to work hard towards a distant goal... and so on".

The crunch question, as he ends by recognizing, is whether he does justice to the claim which has undoubtedly been a persistent part of "participating in the Christian process" (his definition of being a Christian), that in Jesus Christ there has been some uniquely saving act or revelation. He is quite honest in believing that Christians have not learned to speak a different language: "I do not say that just like revealed in Jesus Christ... just like that, absolutely, impersonally, and I say that it is not a good thing to say. I say that God has been revealed to me in Jesus Christ, and has been to many millions of people throughout history". Yet "God" is not revealed fully in Jesus Christ to me, nor indeed to anyone that I have met; or that my historical studies have uncovered. Whether one can resolve the issue, theologically as well as historically, by such a radical existentializing of the question is doubtful. Cantwell Smith remains conscious that for some "what I can offer is a not nearly Christian enough - Christian's contribution. Nonetheless, I somehow thought I was trying". It was and is.

## HISTORY OF IDEAS

GEOFFREY G. FIELD:  
*Evangelist of Race  
The Germanic Vision of Houston  
Stewart Chamberlain*  
565pp. New York: Columbia University Press, \$32.50.  
0 231 04860 2

RODERICK STACKELBERG:  
*Idealism Debated  
From Volkisch Ideology to National  
Socialism*  
202pp. Eurospan/Kent State University Press, £10.95.  
0 87338 252 8

Every time I think I have made peace with German culture, someone comes along and publishes a book about Wagnerites. These two books, Geoffrey G. Field's *Evangelist of Race* and Roderick Stackelberg's *Idealism Debated*, are the most depressing reading I have done for many months, not because they are incompetent but precisely because they are competent. Field's solid biography of Houston Stewart Chamberlain comes, in fact, as close to being definitive as any life can hope to be - at least I cannot imagine another scholar again ploughing through all of Chamberlain's repulsive writings or shoving again through the intellectual sewer from which he drew what we must, I suppose, call his ideas. These books are eloquent reminders that much of high German culture in the Empire or what passed for high culture - was poisoned by self-serving theories of race for which there was not a shred of respectable evidence, by self-centred fantasies of national glory that read like transcriptions of neurotic manoeuvres designed to evade feelings of inferiority or impotence, and by a self-intoxicated rhetoric of which a schoolboy in his senses would have been ashamed.

Field's biography of Houston Stewart Chamberlain is in fact a most interesting study, and a highly self-conscious piece of work. It disclaims any intentions of posing as a psychoanalysis and warns, not unreasonably, against the risks that the psychoanalytically orientated biographer must take. At the same time, just as reasonably, Field finds the psychological dimensions in Chamberlain's life and work inescapable and important, and he scatters judgements that show at least a nodding acquaintance with Freud through his book. He quotes, in full, a pair of Chamberlain's anxiety dreams, in both of which Chamberlain has been captured by Jews and condemned to death by them. Then he generalizes about Chamberlain's "sense of isolation", his "knot of national estrangement and personal anxiety" which "remained entangled to his character", leading, in his adult life, to "an impressionable search for roots in Germany", and suggests that his "hostility to England was also mixed with strong elements of guilt and self-doubt". Field's frequent and extensive quotations from Chamberlain's diaries, letters, and vast corpus of published writings bear out this thumb-nail diagnosis.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain was, or early grew into, the very thing he least wanted to become: a rootless cosmopolitan. He was also, with his uncertain physical and mental health, the very opposite of the Nordic hero he made into his strident ideal. Men of ideas are often yolked reaction formations, denying impulses or characteristics they dare not acknowledge by moving to the other extreme. Chamberlain was a textbook example of the type, bleating for what he could never be. He was born in England in 1855; his father was an admiral and his mother had aristocratic connections, but he was to reject the England that was so unmistakably his heritage. After his mother died, when he was a year old, he was turned over to his paternal grandmother and an unmarried aunt who lived in Versailles, and he was not pure Wagnerian. It was, of course, his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1899, a glibly cultural and assorted

other languages, in later years. His schooling, back in England, was a French, and too spoilt, to fit in with his games-playing, rough-housing class-mates. Then, in 1870, he had his first glimpse of Germany; it was fateful. "From the beginning," he reminisced almost half a century later, he saw "not a philistine Germany, not a Germany of travelling salesmen and company directors, still less a nation of unrealistic dreamers and professors, and least of all a Germany of chattering parliamentarians and weak-kneed ministers. Rather, it was with the knightly cadres commanded by immortal heroes." It did not take long for his Teutonic infatuation to flower: he wanted to be part of a country of men with strong knees, a land of medieval heroes, preferably immortal.

As soon as he could, Chamberlain returned to Germany to stay, converting the country of his adoption into what Field aptly describes as "an idealized homeland which he called 'Germany'". As early as the late 1870s, when he was about twenty, his dominant life's fantasy was firmly in place. "I cannot tell you," he wrote in 1876 to Anna Horst, who was to become his wife, "how much I reverence, my passionate love for Germany and my faith in her increases. The more I learn of other nations, the more I mix with people of all classes - educated and uneducated - from all the countries of Europe, the more I love Germany and the Germans" - and so on for some pages. And he concluded: "6:45 in the evening. Ah you beloved German nation! Will you never discover your exalted role that your ordained path is not to be that of the other nations?" To this sick, potentially dangerous delusion of wishes and fantasies, Chamberlain promptly added antisemitism. Field's book is, as he notes, essentially about antisemitism, and he supplies a malodorous bouquet of mean-spirited, paranoid, increasingly vicious remarks about Jews - their smell and their corrosiveness, their mendacity and mercantile mentality, their resemblance to vermin - large enough, and redolent enough, to last the reader a lifetime.

Diligently and patiently, Field follows Chamberlain through his long life - his discovery of Wagner, his attempts at a scientific career, his breakdown, and his final discovery of a vocation: that of a German *Litkrit* espousing the cause of cultural renewal as imagined, disseminated, and sold at an exorbitant price by the Bayreuthian circle around Cosima Wagner and her dutiful acolytes. Richard Wagner had died in early 1883, and his death did wonderful things for his inconsolable widow. Guilt-ridden and lachrymose about her slatful betrayal of her first husband, Hans von Bülow, and about the sufferings to which she had exposed her children, she now turned, into the authoritative keeper of Wagner's shrine and the high priestesses of his doctrine. Though, in the eyes of the faithful, a mere woman, Cosima Wagner could command the Wagnerian troops with calm confidence because everyone (some father grudgingly) admitted that she spoke for the Master. Chamberlain earned his way into this quasi-religious cult by serving an apprenticeship among Wagnerites in Vienna, and then writing, extensively and plausibly, about the Master and his legacy. Later, after he divorced his elderly and invalid wife, he sealed his allegiance to this Nordic faith by marrying Wagner's youngest daughter, Eva. His authenticity as a spokesman for heroic Germany was complete.

The single act of Chamberlain's life, though, that brought him international celebrity and industrial favour - Emperor Wilhelm II became a fervent admirer and close friend - was not pure Wagnerism. It was, of course, his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1899, a glibly cultural and assorted

polity, biblical exegesis, racial slurs, and *Kulturgeschichte*. It was, as Roderick Stackelberg justly says, not the "work of history, philosophy, and anthropology" that Chamberlain proclaimed it to be, but "a political tract". It is the kind of book, with its vast generalizations, sweeping vistas, and portentous pronouncements, that readers like to think they have understood. It seems to present impressive insights which enlist their dizzied consumers into an exclusive club of cultivated critics of vulgar modernity; reading about elites and their subversion, the reader may join the elite and despise the subversives. The book, as Field rightly notes, was the work of a dilettante and an autodidact: "I know nothing about history," Chamberlain wrote to Cosima Wagner, frankly enough, "nothing at all." But this did not stop him from writing, nor others from reading him. Chamberlain was an indefatigable, indiscriminate, and voracious reader, skimming useful quotations from his massive consumption of the most varied fare, and happily uninhibited by critical judgment. As Geoffrey Field shows in a long and very valuable chapter on the reception of the *Foundations*, this impudent amateurishness only increased his readership. The sceptical reservations of professional historians did not dampen the ardour of Chamberlain's admirers. He told them what they wanted to hear.

After the *Foundations*, Chamberlain wrote much else, but up to his death in 1927 he remained, at least for the general public, the author of this one book. He lived long enough to witness the end of his beloved Empire, the travail of the despised Weimar Republic, and the emergence of a most interesting demagogue, Adolf Hitler. The one lesson his copious publications should have imparted was one that few people were willing to draw: a lot of learning, when yoked to ineradicable bigotry, is a dangerous thing.

Field's is a very long book. It tells us more about Houston Stewart Chamberlain than we want to know, though not what we ought to know. As a trained historian, Field carefully puts all of the man and his notions into their context. He discusses German antisemitism and its varieties, fanatical vegetarianism and its political implications, racial anthropology and its fatal heritage, that stew of rural nostalgia, anti-urbanism, racism and nationalism known to us as the untranslatable German word *volkisch*. He says nothing of Teutonic Christianity, the happy idea that Jesus was no Jew (an idea that Chamberlain championed) and perhaps even a German (a notion so far-fetched as to seem improbable even to Chamberlain). Field, then, has written a cultural history of a sordid, but potent element in German life, which is still not wholly eradicated. My only reservations are the measure of uncertainty that Field displays among his auxiliary disciplines. He seems to be willing to draw from mutually exclusive doctrines in social psychology, including Adorno's authoritarian personality, a conflation of left-wing convictions and revisionist Freudianism that has long since been discredited. Antisemitism remains something of a puzzle, and its varieties deserve to be canvassed and, perhaps, understood separately, just as we are learning to understand cancer by breaking it down into a whole spectrum of diseases. Field's use of Freud's ideas is equally tentative. It will not do simply to quote dreams and interpret them as though their manifest contents exhaust their meaning. But these are small cavils; Field's *Evangelist of Race* is, though disheartening, a very valuable book.

For those who find more than 500 closely packed pages on one man - and such a man - too daunting, Roderick Stackelberg's economical *Idealism Debated* may be the book to read. It takes the measure of three German *volkische* writers: the Wagnerian propagandist Heinrich von Stein, whose early death left the

Bayreuth headquarters sadly depleted; the novelist and playwright Friedrich Lienhard, who called for Germany's "renewal" in language, and with images, which the Nazis were to find immensely useful; and none other than Houston Stewart Chamberlain, ably summed up in fifty pages. For Stackelberg, in Germany, the worst was born from the corruption of the best - the debased ideology of the Nazis and their fellow-travellers was the distillate of an idealist collection of ideas. The best in this case, I might add, was scarcely impressive. Stackelberg, like Field, ventures into psychoanalytical explanations - the proliferal history of Nazism seem to invite this kind of analysis with particular urgency, much to the detriment of psychoanalytic ideas, which, after all, Freud developed to explain all of the human mind, normal as well as neurotic, elevated as much as debased. "Self-styled idealists", Stackelberg notes, "failed to live up to their own avowed principles. Projecting their own egocentrism onto Jews, they either failed to realize or refused to admit that their hierarchical notions of triumphant spiritual forces were in fact self-serving." In brief, and thoughtful intellectual profiles of his three subjects, Stackelberg buttresses this case beyond much doubt.

Both Field and Stackelberg, different as their books are in intention and execution, raise an important question about German historiography. After the collapse, in 1945, of the Thousand Year Reich, young historians of Germany, disinclined to exculpate their compatriots for their crimes and unwilling to put the blame on everyone except themselves, sought earnestly for the roots of Nazism in their own past. They came up with an impressive collection of villains from Luther to Wilhelm II, with Bismarck the easy

favourite. Most notably, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, in his popular short history of the German Empire, detected ideological and structural flaws which he described as a serious, ultimately fateful legacy. Wehler, and his school of thought, are infinitely preferable to the apologists who have insisted, in that convenient German phrase of denial "Es ist nicht meine Schuld" - it is not my fault! But these historians paid a price for their relentless severity with their own past; they oversimplified the cultural pluralism, and underrated the liberal potential, of the decades in which first Bismarck, then Wilhelm II, were at the rudder. In my own *Freud, Jews and Other Germans*, I rather mildly criticized this school for seeing all of the German past as prologue to Hitler. But these two books under review, though cautious in their building of bridges, affirm at least some connections between the Imperial decades and the Nazi regime. "It has become almost the fashion for historians of Germany to warn against the temptation to look forward to 1933", Field writes, "claiming that the 'search for parallels and prototypes' distorts the history of the Kaiserreich." And yet, though alert to this peril, and intent on avoiding the "teleological trap", Field believes (and Stackelberg would agree with him) that "inevitably the career of Chamberlain does lead us towards the horrifying reality of the Nuremberg Laws and Auschwitz". This is persuasively put. The point of all good historical writing is, obviously, to do justice to continuities and discontinuities alike. Modern German history will remain a battleground of conflicting interpretations in large part because the respective shares of continuity and discontinuity remain so hard to assess. Field has done much - and so has Stackelberg - to point the way towards a reasonable balance.

## To know the unknowable

By Henry Chadwick

ANDREW LOUTH:  
*The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*  
215pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £12.50.  
0 19 826655 3

This is a book which needed writing, and its execution by an engaged scholar expert in Christian antiquity is most welcome. Andrew Louth writes with deep sympathy for his theme, and with a wide-ranging knowledge of the texts. He divides his work into ten chapters: three on pre-Christian antiquity; five on the principal mystical writers among the Fathers of the Church; from Origen to Denys; and then two appendages of special interest on the relation between patristic mysticism and St John of the Cross.

The preparation for the Christian tradition is introduced by preliminary discussions of Plato, Philo, and Plotinus. At the fountain-head of the stream Plato teaches that in an ecstasy transcending reason we may know the unknowable Beauty which is also the One and the Good. He also bequeathes a sharp tension between the ideals of contemplation withdrawal and active participation in political life in the service of society. God is the sun by whose light the soul is enabled to see. The hellenized Jew, Philo of Alexandria, elder contemporary of St Paul, takes up the ecstatic language of Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Ion*, first coining the

phrase "sober intoxication" to describe the elevation of the soul to its origin in God, but insisting that the transcendent God can be known only by his own gift of grace, by a revelation enshrined in the law and the prophets. Plotinus, by contrast, has no doctrine of grace. The path to union with God is a planned withdrawal from the things of sense, to concentrate on the higher reality which is free of all limitations in space and time, and, by purifying the soul of all passions, to restore it to its true self. This is the soul's way of self-transcendence as it passes upwards into pure Mind, in a flight of the alone to the Alone.

The focus then turns to the Christians in the Bibleist Origen finding his mysticism mediated through direct meditation on the text of Holy Scripture; to Athanasius' emphatic vulnerability to passing downwards to non-being; then to the surprising rejection of ecstasy and the denial of the ultimacy of contemplation found in Gregory of Nyssa, a writer profoundly influenced by Plotinus. The masters of ascetic theology following Evagrius the arch-intellectual standing in the tradition of Origen: the very un-Origenist (but no less intelligent and sophisticated) "Macarius" of the Messalian movement, that is fourth-century Syria and Asia Minor, feelings of their religion of the heart and trying to "revelate" it via media between Evagrius and Macarian elements. In an attempt to keep his mysticism orthodox (as Evagrius and "Macarius" were thought not to have, sentimentally).

done). Augustine and Denys the Areopagite each have a chapter to themselves: Augustine finding in the experience of grace the reality that Platonic mysticism seemed to promise without being able actually to deliver, and more soberly encouraging the notion of a gradual process of daily sanctification in preference to the quest for sudden ecstatic exclamation. For Denys, there is a paradox that once one has realised by the austere negative way that no symbols or images can express the being of God, one becomes marvelously liberated to use them without inhibition.

The book's treatment of the massive patristic evidence is spiced with liberal and well-chosen quotations. The author knows what to leave out, make his point incisively for him, and in no way seeks to give an exhaustive account of the theology of each of the writers that he discusses. A central theme in his analysis of Christian mysticism is the indissoluble connection that the Christian writers make between the theological exegesis of the Bible and the experience of divine grace uniting the soul to God. That experience is seen by some in highly intellectualistic terms, and by others more in terms of feeling. As Louth gives us a Gregory of Nyssa of intellectual interest, namely an intellectual mystic who comes regarded of his contemporary Macarius, if correct, this is some historical importance. It is particularly good to have a book on spirituality which is trenchant and without any touch of

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ments like Marjorie Bowra's, on the point beginning "I took my heart in my hand", when he says "No woman could write with this terrible directness, if she did not to some degree know the experience she describes." It all turns on the phrase "to some degree". Surely we are not to conclude, on the strength of certain scenes in *Madness*, that Shakespeare murdered a king? To what degree did Emily Browne "know the experience" she describes in her poems - or in *Whispering Heights*?

And this brings me to an aspect of the question which Mrs Battiscombe does not go into. I have mentioned Emily Browne and Emily Dickinson. In both these cases, as is well known, there seems to be a discrepancy between what is actually known, or can be plausibly inferred, about their personal lives, and the intensity of their poetry. They too have been credited with secret lovers and tragic frustrations. Is it not possible that the really relevant biographical (or sociological) fact is that all these women belong to a similar personality-type and share a similar cultural situation? (Elizabeth Barrett could be added to the list, before her engagement with Robert Browning.) There is the closely-knit family, fulfilling the need for affection and intellectual stimulus. There is the tendency to become recluses, withdrawing further and further from external society. And there is the poetry of all four women, with its reiteration of the themes of passion frustrated and renounced, of devotional religion, of death seen sometimes as a release from suffering, sometimes as the entry into a higher life, of "joy in its fullness".

This "typological" character of Christina Rossetti's poetry is well brought out by Lionel Stevenson in his book on the Pre-Raphaelites (1972). And many years ago Molly Mahood, in *Poetry and Humanism* (1950), drew attention to the great affinities of Christina's sensibility, imagery, and subject-matter, and the general emotional character of her poetry, with the Romantic tradition - especially in its "Romantic agony" phase. A favourite novelist, Melan, author of *Meinhold the Wanderer*, more than once supplied themes and imaginary situations for the young poet to dramatize. Literary tradition, as well as psychological type, must be given its due weight - a considerable weight - in the appraisal of the poems.

All the same, I cannot help feeling sympathy with Mrs Packer. I find it difficult to accept her judgment, reiterated insistently, that Christina was a great poet; but, as someone who of course wrote for a good many of the poems, I am attracted by this enthusiasm. And all readers must be grateful for the careful scholarship which Mrs Packer put into her work. The trouble is that she had a hie in her bonnet, and it is doubtful whether it was a honey-bee.

It is not for a mere reader of the poetry, who has not himself carried out biographical research, to pronounce dogmatically on the work of biographers. But I cannot help wondering whether some of her inquiries have got on to the wrong track. Of course to the modern secularist the religious beliefs of a Christina Rossetti must necessarily be illusions, or delusions. But even from the psychological point of view it must be significant if Collinson, or Cayley, or William Bell Scott - had a more powerful Rival in Almighty God. I think Bowra was right to suggest that Christina's reluctance to marry may have been due, not to a commonplace fear of "sex", but to a doubt whether the love that suffused her life was something for which any earthly object was adequate.

And must it always be assumed that religious poets are only interesting for what their poetry tells us about them? When Emily Browne writes, "Then dawn the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals" why does it have to be assumed that the "truth" revealed is only something about Emily Browne? I cannot find any poem of Christina Rossetti's that has quite the same power as that poem of Emily Browne's (it is usually known as "The Prisoner"). Nor does she seem (unlike her sister Maria) to have had a genuine vocation to the religious life, in a more narrowly orthodox sense. But, their religious



A sketch of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, aged seventeen

aspect of her work is not incidental, nor an excessiveness. It has been urged against Christina Rossetti that her range is very narrow, and she has been contrasted with George Herbert, to her disadvantage. When Herbert says, in "The Pearl", "I know the ways of Learning... the ways of Pleasure", we have a glimpse of something that is an asset to his poetry. "The strength of the religious poetry of the metaphysical poets," says Dame Helen Gardner, "is that they bring to their praise and prayer meditation so much experience that is not in itself religious". But when, to a George Herbert, is "not in itself religious"? Can "religion" be compartmentalized in this way? I doubt it. It can even in Christina Rossetti. So many of the love poems turn into religious poems. In her best poetry, we are in a region where "love" and "religion" are only different words for the same thing.

Fortunately there are poems like "Remember me when I have gone away", or "My heart is like a singing-bird", or "When I am dead, my dearest" that raise no such intellectual and emotional problems. Christina's lovely singing voice and her direct, unadorned style and simple diction will always hold readers. And in her best poem, *Goblin Market*, she found the artistic expression, the "evocative para-symbol", which brings together the two sides of her genius: her intense sensuality, and her intense asceticism. All the biographers testify to this, whatever turns they use. Mrs Battiscombe's way of describing the division, as representing the "Italian" and the "English" sides of her ancestry, is a little tautologous. Some Italians have been very puritanical; we have only to think of St Francis of Assisi, giving thanks to God for "the death of the body". But however it should be described, and whether or not it was a source of conflict to her, this duality was the making of *Goblin Market*.

Everything about this poem is attractive. Its irregular rhythm, censured by Ruskin, would for most readers illustrate rather than "quality of the unexpected, the avoidance of the cliché in metre" which Ford Madox Ford saw as the charm of Christina's verse. As Mrs Battiscombe points out, it is an excellent poem of what is going to happen next. If Victorian narrative verse "comes back", as Victorian verse punting has "come back", *Goblin Market* will hold on even higher place. And it has on imaginative freedom which the great Victorian poets seem to attain best when they are writing poems that are meant for, or could be enjoyed by, children: poems like *The Forsaken Melan*, or *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. It is a good fairy-story, whatever else it is.

Is it an allegory? This has been suggested; though Christina herself said she had no allegory in mind. Various interpretations have been proposed. For Mrs Packer, as we

should expect, the goblins represent the poet's outlawed love for W. D. Scott, Maureen Duffy, in *The Erotic World of Fairy*, has analysed the poem as a sexual fantasy, without reference to particular individuals. And a rival interpretation has appeared in the magazine *Playboy*. Everyone to his taste. There is no "correct" interpretation of *Goblin Market*. If you prefer to read it as no more than a delightful poem for children then that is what it is for you. I see something terrifying in it: a parasite of temptation and sin. That it was probably not meant to be that, is irrelevant. The genius of Christina Rossetti was not compartmental, and the fable of *Goblin Market* can be seen to express, all the more effectively because implicitly, the fall of Eve and the redemption of human nature by Christ. The unbeliever can ignore this, and enjoy the extraordinary sensuous vividness of the goblins and their fruit. The devil, goitally speaking, always has the best tunes; Don Giovanni is more exciting than the "good" characters; in *Goblin Market*, Laura the wayward sister wins more hearts than Lizzie, who seems a bit wishy-washy. But none of this is an artistic fault, or detracts from the meaning. It only shows that Christina Rossetti was an artist at the old school of Spenser and Milton, who thought that temptations should be shown as tempting.

And of her work generally, it may be said that, while it may be fairly described as poetry of renunciation, it conveys a keen sense of what has been renounced. "In the world we shall receive great tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." I think the reader of her poetry feels it to be superior to Charlotte Yonge's novels, in conveying more effectively the reality of the "world" that has to be overcome. As Yeats wrote:

I broke my heart in two,  
So hard I struck.  
What matter? For I know  
That out of rock,  
Out of a desolate source,  
Love leaps upon its course.

More than 200 historical documents relating to the lives of women in England, France and the United States, have been collected and edited by Erna Olafson Hellerstein, Leslie Parker Hume and Karen M. Offen under the title of *Victorian Women* (534pp, Harvester Press, £25.00/£18.00). The editors present a wide range of source material that includes diaries, letters, legal records, and the findings of official inquiries, in four main sections: "The Girl"; "The Adult Woman - Personal Life"; "The Adult Woman - Work"; and "The Older Woman". Among the topics covered are education, courtship and marriage, prostitution in London, and French cottage industry. Many of the documents are here translated or published for the first time and will, the editors hope, "give readers a new view of the nineteenth century, and... broaden their understanding of women's history".

## Adventuresses all

By Carol Rumens

AT EXAMINER ALLEN:  
Travelling Ladies  
200pp, Jipiter, £7.95.  
0 906379 10 4

The wealth of fascinating material in this account of eight nineteenth-century female explorers is at times almost submerged by poor organization and a slack literary style. The majority of the women here published their own vivid descriptions of their travels, and, quite justifiably, Alexandra Allen gives lavishly from these. She fails, however, to include precise bibliographic sources, and though her work is obviously aimed at the non-academic reader, detailed information of this sort, as well as many more maps, would have added a great deal to its interest. But perhaps what one misses most from *Travelling Ladies* is any sort of probing of motivation.

These eight travellers were well-known, well-bred ladies who managed not so much to question as to ignore society's narrow definition of the female role. Three of them, Mildred Cable and Evangeline and Frances French were, of course, missionaries; and Marianna North was an artist. They did not travel light, taking with them innumerable servants, and luggage that might include a tin bath, an expanding dining-table, and supplies from Fortnum and Mason. May French Sheldon (an American Southerner whose achievements included the translation of Flaubert's *Salammbô* into blank verse) added to her equipment an alpenstock, to which was attached a pennant inscribed "noli me tangere" - a command that must have acted as a useful restraining force on the East African tribesmen she encountered.

The most glamorous of the band was the high-born Jane Digby, not strictly a Victorian Adventuress (as the book's subtitle coyly describes its subjects), since she was born in 1807, but indubitably an adventuress.

Ms Allen's novelistic touch is at full brim in this chapter: "Felix Schwartzburg... was the embodiment of all Jane's romantic dreams and secret longings. He was a dark, dashing and gallant foreign aristocrat, the Russian prince to Jane's Cinderella, who swept her off her feet in the first dance at Alcock's as he clasped her to his lustrous jacket". This was only the beginning of Jane's adventures; many lovers and several divorces later we find her creeping into the tent of Sheikh Medjidi - "her fourth and last husband" - as the author announces, with an almost audible sigh of relief. It was the pursuit of love, suggests the starchy-eyed Ms Allen, that sent Jane Digby on her travels. But was it really necessary to slog across Damascus by yak in order to find what was obviously not in short supply nearer home? The assessment is surely an injustice to a complex, and brave and highly-intelligent character.

Whatever they were ostensibly pursuing, these women not only made significant contributions to the growth of anthropology and ethnography, but often showed a humanitarianism far in advance of the established views of the day. Imperialistic self-righteousness pervades even the nobility of aspiration expressed by the preacher who delivered Livingstone's funeral oration in Westminster Abbey: "the humblest wayfarer in the far East on the further South has it in his power by fairness, by kindness, by justice, to leave behind him his stamp on those who in him, perhaps for the first and last time, have the chance of knowing what is meant by a European, and by Christian". Daisy Bates' words on the tragedy of the aborigines, whom she lived among and nursed for several years, emphasize the darker side of western influence, one with which a woman was, perhaps, particularly able to sympathize: "their age-old laws were set aside, their laws they did not understand... They died in their numbers from the white man's diseases... 'Civilization', she concluded, "was a mantle they donned easily enough, but they could not wear it and live it".

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Edwin Abbott Abbott (1838-1926), author of *Flatland* and forty other books; also *Howard Chandler*, his life-long friend; any relevant information or papers; for a history of the fourth dimension.

Thomas Banchoff (1914-40) Bures-sur-Yvette, France. 35 Route de Chartres, (91440) Bures-sur-Yvette.

Thomas Bennet (1673-1728): Rector, St Giles's, Cripplegate, London; Fellow, St John's College, Cambridge; author of *An Essay on the 39 Articles*, 1715. Information is needed of any surviving portraits and about his descendants, such as the married names of his three daughters by Elizabeth Hunt of Salisbury; for a study of his bibliographical work with copies of the 39 Articles.

W. L. Williamson.

4253 Helen C. White, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Ryanand Chandler: for an authorized biography dealing with the period after 1945 and with particular reference to the English years. I would be grateful for information concerning both unpublished correspondence between Chandler and Alvarn "Chile" Guevara and also documentation, photographs, etc. relating to their meetings in England and California.

Andrew Sinclair.

c/o Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 81 Clapham High Street, London SW4.

Joseph Conrad: Notes on Life and Letters: information on the whereabouts of either in private hands or not listed in standard sources of manuscripts, typescripts, and proofs for the complete works of Conrad's essays.

J. H. Stane, Department of English, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A1.

Council for Education in World Citizenship: for a history of its origins and development. Of particular value would be press-cuttings before 1953, and the Annual Reports for the following years: 1945, 1961-62, 1962-63, 1966-67, 1967-68, 1969-70, 1971, 1974-75. Any documents sent will be handled with care, immediately photocopied and returned.

Derek Heuter, Humanities Department, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9PH.

Field-Marshal Sir John Dill (1881-1944): Chief of the Imperial General Staff (1940-41) and Head of the British Joint Staffs Mission in Washington (1941-44). Information, particularly about the Washington years, requested for biographical study. Personal reminiscences especially welcome.

Captain Alex Dancie, Political and Social Studies Department, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4PQ.

## Two touching solitudes

By Mark Abley

JANE JACOBS:  
The Question of Separatism  
Quebec and the Struggle over Sovereignty  
134pp, Junction Books, 1976  
paperback, £3.95.  
0 85245 023 3

Some topics are, in some cultures, unthinkable. Despite its bland title, Jane Jacobs' slender book is devoted to an argument that may still be, to many English Canadians, almost as unthinkable as the Case for Rape or Benefits of Nuclear War. Jacobs, an American sociologist who has lived in Toronto since the 1940s, believes that political separatism can be a humane and valuable process; that Quebec would probably be better off, culturally and economically, as an independent nation; and that its departure from the Confederation would not cause the break-up of the rest of Canada. She writes calmly and with intermittent lucidity about feelings that usually provoke either passionate anger or passionate admiration. And in so far as she gives voice to ideas that are usually unspoken, *The Question of Separatism* performs a very useful service.

For most of the past two hundred years, Quebecois nationalism has been an inward-looking, backward-looking force. Even today the provincial motto is *Je me souviens*. Conscious of being hemmed into a continent dominated by the English language and the Anglo-Saxon race, the priests and teachers of Quebec tended to define their existence in terms of a historic mission of survival and witness. Defensive, at times sulky, these guardians of minority culture gave their political task a spiritual meaning. And when, during the "Quiet Revolution" of the early 1960s, the old Quebec began to be transformed, its new spokesmen adapted the transcendent nationalism of the past to their own purposes. Pierre Trudeau, writing in 1962, proclaimed that "the past will have to be denounced in the name of the future. We must project an image of the future that is vast and wonderfully mythical, one that will place in our now empty sky a compelling vision... The future has never inspired us; it will be beautiful to see what happens to a people who suddenly rise up and learn of the monumental plan of their future." The rhetoric jars in translation, but even in French such ringing declarations sound dated now. It is one of the great achievements of René Lévesque and his Parti Québécois to have turned such vague ardour into a political force, and to have created a nationalist image of the future that has more in it of pragmatism than of myth.

Lévesque believes that Quebec's future lies in "sovereignty-association", a term that demands some explanation. Jacobs suggests that "Allied Powers", "Group of Independents" or "Canadian League" might be synonymous with it. In brief, a Quebec which has successfully negotiated sovereignty-association would enjoy full independence from Canada, with its own system of taxation, its own seat at the UN, and its own membership of Nato and (perhaps) the Commonwealth. But the links between the sovereignty of English Canada and that of Quebec would be close: free trade, free trade, a customs union, a common currency, military cooperation, and so on. This is some distance away from the outright independence desired by many supporters of the Parti Québécois, and as much of Jacobs' book is directly concerned with the relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the title of the British edition seems curious. (The original title, *Canadian Cities and Sovereignty-Association*, is marginally more accurate.) Jane Jacobs believes that financial affairs she actually criticizes one of his proposals as excessively moderate; in a few trenchant pages she shows that a common currency would surely

lead to friction and bitterness, between the two countries, and she suggests that Quebec should gradually acquire a working currency of its own, as the Irish Republic did with relation to the British pound.

Her knowledge of Quebec nationalism is not founded on intimate acquaintance with Canadian history, but in the book's longest chapter she does attempt to draw a historical analogy to Quebec's present condition. Her chosen example is the achievement by Norway, in 1905, of independence from Sweden, after a peaceful struggle lasting nearly a century. In showing how the Norwegians wrested all possible concessions, whether economic, cultural or merely symbolic, from their political masters, and how the Swedes reluctantly came to accept the fiction of their realm, she presents behaviour on both sides that did "harm" to civilization. Furthermore, she claims that the separation released energies and ideas which have made for a prosperous, alert Norwegian nation. (She does not, however, mention the accomplishments of Norway's greatest artists - Ibsen, Grieg, Munch and Munch - all of whom grew up during the period of nationalistic ferment. This may be a prudent omission, for independent Norway has produced no artists of comparable stature.)

The story is a fascinating one, and it is true that certain parallels exist between the Swedish state of the late nineteenth century and the Canada of today. The ratios of population - Sweden to Norway, English Canada to Quebec - are similar, and the recent growth of artistic and linguistic confidence in Quebec resembles that of Norway a hundred years ago. But there are also a great many differences which Jacobs carefully minimizes. She fails to observe the centrifugal tendencies elsewhere in Canada, particularly in Alberta and British Columbia; nor does she take into account the overwhelming presence of the United States; nor does she make enough of the fact that a sovereign Quebec would divide Canada in two, with the economically deprived Atlantic provinces being separated by many hundreds of miles from the main part of the country. For all these reasons, Canada's very existence would be imperilled by Quebec's separation in a way quite unlike that of Sweden in 1905. The political differences between the Norwegian example and the Quebec position are equally striking. Even in the nineteenth century, Norway had a supreme court, a constitution, and a national bank of its own. Moreover, no Norwegians sat in the Swedish assembly. The Québécois, of course, elect politicians not only to their own legislature but also to the parliament of Canada, and for well over half of the post-war period, the Canadian Prime Minister has come from Quebec. There has been no more implacable opponent of separation than Pierre Trudeau.

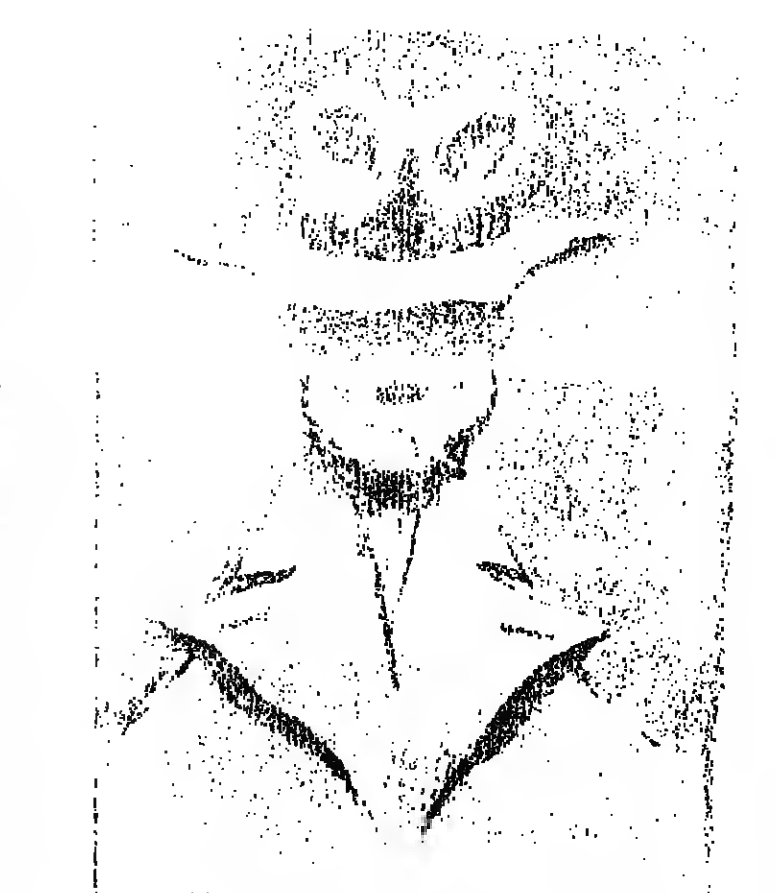
The most valuable sections of *The Question of Separatism* have little to do with separatism. Jacobs has a keen eye for the folly which underlies most economic thinking, and the assumption that "the basic wealth of the country is... what can be taken out of the ground and shipped away". The health of the Norwegian economy is, as she rightly observes, based on the understanding that "wealth also consists of innovation, invention and development of indigenous manufacturing". A symptom of the predicament is that Canada sends grain to Norway, which sends farm machinery in return. Canada, having been blessed by an abundance of natural resources, continues to squander their blessings by neglecting to develop industries based on invention and manufacturing, and even today a huge proportion of their industry is in foreign hands. Jacobs characterizes this as a "profoundly colonial approach to economic life, and one which the patient has largely inflicted on himself. As might be expected from the author of *The*

*Death and Life of Great American Cities*, she also writes astutely about the differing economic destinies of Toronto and Montreal.

All this does not, however, add up to a satisfying or distinguished book. It frequently betrays its origin in the series of Masey Lectures (Canada's equivalent of the Reith Lectures) delivered over national radio in 1970. Its voice and tone fluctuate between the didactic and the chatty, and Jacobs displays an annoying tendency to hurry away from some of her most interesting points. The style, too, is occasionally murky. "Leave-que's proposal that sovereignty-association be worked out through negotiation in the first place, then after that be fleshed out through further negotiation, is a sensible procedure." Shades of meaning disappear uplily: "The Canadian constitution is still... being amended in Britain", she writes, implying that a legal possibility unused for fifty years is somehow an active process. And in a bizarre effort to link sovereignty-association with behavioural patterns in the natural world, she discusses the interrelated populations of wolves and deer. Surely one of the aims of the Parti Québécois is to prevent English Canada from leading on Quebec.

The work also suffers, on occasion, from a cavalier disregard for facts. Jacobs mistakenly states that Sweden belongs to the European Economic Community, and that Canada's constitution, the British North American Act of 1867, was drafted by Canadians alone. Occasionally an impressive-sounding statistic turns out to prove nothing: "Quebec is no province's poorest customer for Canadian-made goods, not even British Columbia's." Considering that Quebec's population is almost triple that of the four Atlantic provinces combined, this is hardly surprising. To say that the inter-provincial debating matches known as federal-provincial conferences "have become almost as vital to the actual workings of government as annual sessions of Parliament" is nonsense. More importantly, events in the past two or three years have rendered her analysis of Canadian politics inaccurate. No longer do most provincial governments oppose Quebec's demands for greater control over its own resources and communications networks. Nowadays the federal government faces an alliance comprising seven or eight of the ten provinces, including such unlikely partners as Alberta, Quebec and Newfoundland, which are determined to resist any enlargement of Ottawa's authority. Jacobs implies that the federal system of equalization payments, whereby the richer provinces subsidize the economies of the poorer ones, is the most important factor in determining each province's attitude towards the power of the central government. It is a plausible argument, but one which is not borne out by reality.

Perhaps the main difficulty with *The Question of Separatism* arises from its timing. Conceived and delivered in 1979, Jacobs' lectures may well have had the salutary effect of informing English Canadians about the nature of sovereignty-association and the aims of the Parti Québécois. But after the clear defeat suffered by René Lévesque in the 1980 referendum (59.4 per cent of the Quebec voters decided not to give him a mandate to begin negotiations with Ottawa on the subject of sovereignty-association), the subject has temporarily diminished in significance. The book was clearly rewritten in some haste after the referendum had established that the Québécois of today, unlike the Norwegians in 1905, do not want to create a separate state. (The re-election of the Parti Québécois in 1981 had more to do with the continued popularity of René Lévesque and the general approval of his intelligent, uncorrupt administration than it did with the issue of separatism, which was deliberately played down during the campaign.) The question of separation will not, of course, go away.



"Spir - London 1945" a pastel drawing by Aeryn Peake which is to be included in an exhibition of his work at the Waddington Gallery, 25 Cork Street, London W1 from September 9.

But the particular option of sovereignty-association may be modified according to events in the next few years, especially by the final pattern of the repatriated constitution and the authority gained by provinces over language and resources. The interest of Jacobs' scrutiny of the 1980 proposals of the Parti Québécois may, therefore, prove to be largely historical when another referendum is called in five, ten or twenty years' time.

Jacobs approves of sovereignty-association because it appears to embody the principle of diversity. Herself an immigrant to a city which has grown spectacularly through immigration from many countries, she feels that "the vision of an officially bilingual Canada becomes simply arbitrary and silly". This is a direct swipe at Trudeau, and, though Jacobs may not realize it, a many of Quebec's leading spokesmen in the past, Henri Bourassa, for example, wrote in 1912: "I am sure that the preservation and expansion of the French language in each of the English provinces of Canada is the only positive moral guarantee of both the unity of the Canadian Confederation and the maintaining of the British institutions in Canada." In attacking the policy of bilingualism, Jacobs puts herself in the company of those (often bigoted) Western Conservatives who in the 1970s defied their party line and opposed the Official Languages Act: people whose vision of Canada is, unlike hers, uniform and unwilling. Bilingualism need not be an artificial condition, as the inhabitants of Montreal prove every day. And although Quebec culture has flourished remarkably in the past twenty years, Jacobs seems to regard it as a tender sapling that will survive only if sovereignty is soon achieved. This shows very little faith in a civilization that has long been a master at the art of survival. Furthermore, her cherished ideal of diversity would not necessarily meet with favour in an independent Quebec. Earlier this year, for instance, the Montreal sociologist, Hubert Guindon, argued that "The time has come to define the limits of the English nation in Quebec. The process will have to be unpleasant and not particularly tasteful... and the methods will involve breaking the narrow electoral parameters that have failed."

The Parti Québécois has retained

something of the quality of a roman movement. It has captured the emotions of far more people than its federalist opponents; and perhaps in this sense Canada has failed. The result of the 1980 referendum was greeted with little joy and much silence by the voters who had just rejected sovereignty-association so decisively. Many of them, sadly, had felt compelled to choose between their hearts and minds. Like many commentators on the subject, Jacobs uses and fails to comprehend the title of one of Canada's most famous novels: "We are supposed to feel self an immigrant to a city which has grown spectacularly through immigration from many countries, she feels that 'the vision of an officially bilingual Canada becomes simply arbitrary and silly'. This is a direct swipe at Trudeau, and, though Jacobs may not realize it, a many of Quebec's leading spokesmen in the past, Henri Bourassa, for example, wrote in 1912: 'I am sure that the preservation and expansion of the French language in each of the English provinces of Canada is the only positive moral guarantee of both the unity of the Canadian Confederation and the maintaining of the British institutions in Canada.' In attacking the policy of bilingualism, Jacobs puts herself in the company of those (often bigoted) Western Conservatives who in the 1970s defied their party line and opposed the Official Languages Act: people whose vision of Canada is, unlike hers, uniform and unwilling. Bilingualism need not be an artificial condition, as the inhabitants of Montreal prove every day. And although Quebec culture has flourished remarkably in the past twenty years, Jacobs seems to regard it as a tender sapling that will survive only if sovereignty is soon achieved. This shows very little faith in a civilization that has long been a master at the art of survival. Furthermore, her cherished ideal of diversity would not necessarily meet with favour in an independent Quebec. Earlier this year, for instance, the Montreal sociologist, Hubert Guindon, argued that 'The time has come to define the limits of the English nation in Quebec. The process will have to be unpleasant and not particularly tasteful... and the methods will involve breaking the narrow electoral parameters that have failed.'

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## commentary

### The syntax of sadism

By Helen McNell

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?  
Lyttelton Theatre.

"That's familiar", murmurs the idiotic young wife Honey halfway through the second act of Edward Albee's play. It should be; her host George is playing the game of Get the Guests by recounting Honey's secret hysterical pregnancy in the style of *Peter Rabbit*. "I love familiar stories... they're the best", she confides drunkenly, accepting the truth about her history so long as it is thinly disguised as fiction. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a familiar story by now too, its mythic outline clearer almost twenty years after its first production in 1962. George and Martha, the titanic Mummy and Daddy whom Albee has denied the son they would have devoured if they had him, battle it out eternally with each other using their guests Nick and Honey as audience and bit players. The political meaning of the play has faded; George and Martha are only very secondarily the Father and Mother of a stillborn America. The first-act ideological conflict of George's liberal intellectual, representing History, versus Nick, the hypocritically conformist "weave of the future", representing Science, has ceased to be necessary to the sexual and verbal power politics later in the play; in this production it is rushed through in a manner that suggests it might better have been cut.

The National Theatre revival, directed by Nancy Meckler, reinforces *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*'s classic status while losing much of its sexual psychic terror. It begins slowly as comedy of manners (George Paul Eddington's urbane George, one can understand why Henry Fonda was proposed for the role in the original Broadway production). Only in the last hour does attention shift to the underlying drama of Martha's need and George's denial. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was the first major American drama which was centrally about marriage. Its bitching rhetoric has passed so thoroughly into American culture, from Neil Simon to Paul Mazursky to *Soyuzdetfilm*, that now its thrilling viciousness may require a heavier interpretive pressure than it has received. In this loyal production, the loss of rhetorical clout may not be remediable; in respect of dramatic style, *Who's Afraid?* was a false dawn: there has not been such a talky American play since, except by Albee.

Everything that happens in *Who's Afraid?* has been talked into existence. George and Martha's famously imaginary son is as real as anyone else in the play, since he's made out of words. No matter how drunk, vicious or pathetic George and Martha become, they never doubt that language will do whatever they want it to do. In Act 1, they finish each other's sentences, correct grammar and usage and parody expression. This is Albee's authentic syntax of sadism; anything that has been uttered becomes a pawn which the intimate energy can capture and turn against you. But throughout the play George and Martha continue to reiterate each other's thoughts, prompt each other, and wait eagerly, like monomaniacally inebriated children, for each other's fatally familiar bedtime story. These are the lies that truly bind.

Martha is initially stronger and more complex than George, but she cracks first. Her "fugly talents" of protean transformation - not always indicated by Margaret Tyacke's brittle Martha - set the pace for the first half of the play. Then George, the emotional loudspeaker, runner, takes over. This can't be the limit of his vocabulary; he remarks ear-phonically to Martha as he prepares

to play Get the Guests. By the time Martha drags Nick into the kitchen for a quick game of Hump the Hostess, both she and George have grown bored with him. He's merely a bean-bag, like their other "little bugger", the invisible son. Honey's incoherence - a Judy Garland-and-water idiot innocence in Mary Maddox's reading - excites no sympathy whatsoever. She becomes the butt of the audience as well as of George and Martha. Brash Nick begins the evening thinking he can get away with smarmy cliché, not realizing until his own marriage has been ripped apart at the seams, that he is up against two professionals. When Nick cracks early in Act 2, confessing that he married Honey because of her money and her false pregnancy, George immediately loses interest in this sincere male bonding, and cynically feeds Nick a tear-jerking *Catcher in the Rye* tale of matricide, patricide and "bergin and water". This story appears to be true, but George has polished it so well by frequent retelling that it sits nicely next to the "false" tale of the son, infinitely interpretable. When George and Martha do finally lapse into silence, the play ends.

This *Who's Afraid?* looks like a play about vulnerability and endurance; also intelligence. Despite its title, *Who's Afraid?* hides its literary debts; and its characters, supposedly intellectual, make surprisingly few references to the culture that George, at least, purports to be defending. Dippy Honey sighs that the door chimers are "foe-bells", and they are, since they are about to admit a ghost, but this ghost hint is developed in neither text nor production. At the National, *Who's Afraid?* feels like a long play, with its oppressive unity of time, place and action; it doesn't so much suggest a cruel world outside from which George and Martha seek solace in their mutual illusion, as a

small no-exit hell with no outside at all.

One consequence of such closeness is a fascination with what little movement there is. Nancy Meckler's production is physically static until Honey, Martha and Nick perform their aesthetic and sexual dances halfway through Act 2. Before this, every physical movement carries a disproportionate burden. A chaise longue on stage right functions as the Lovers' Corner; whoever sits there is nullified until he or she finds a way back to stage centre. But George and Martha's living room remains astonishingly tidy after three hours of drinking, fighting, necking and sinking. Paul Eddington has a large vocabulary of cross-stage drink-carrying walks, which culminates in his furious hunched-shoulder stride in the third act as he launches Kill the Kid, the game to end all games. David Schofield begins as a button-bursting, hands-thrust-in-pockets Nick who, like the Tennessee Williams stud he parodies, might be so much more interesting with his clothes off. In Act 3, deflated by his failure to measure up to Martha's sexual demands, he has visibly shrunk; his frame aags and his clothes look too big for him. Schofield's experience in fringe theatre, where he played the original Elephant Man for Foco Novo, seems to have served him to good stead. Even so, slender and dark, he has to cope with being cast against physical type, since Albee's Nick is "blond, well put together, good-looking" - the American Dream-boy after he has got his PhD.

Margaret Tyacke, replacing Joan Plowright, who withdrew, actually looks the part of the fitful New England Faculty wife, genteel and greying, but she doesn't succeed in overturning an expectation of what Albee calls a "voluptuous" Martha.

Both Uta Hagen's powerfully man-nish, castrating Martha in Alan Schneider's New York production (if I remember correctly) and Elizabeth Taylor's one-track full-speed-ahead sexy Martha in Mike Nichols's film version left images which Tyacke's performance does not replace. Tyacke's Martha shrieks and finally breaks down beautifully into truth, but she can't "bray" as Albee directs (almost all of Albee's stage directions refer to delivery rather than movement or interpretation). Perhaps because the director is American, this production is mercifully free of the National Theatre's "festival of accents" approach to American drama, even though Nick, as a Mid-Westerner, should be sounded barser and flatter than his New England hosts.

When Martha finally agrees to try to live a life without illusion and falteringly admits that she is afraid of what she can't call the big bad wolf of reality, *Who's Afraid?* buys its resolution at a high thematic price. It is difficult to conceive that after the silver jubilee of their illusion George and Martha will be able to live happily without it for ever after. This sentimental close comes from Albee's *The Joyman Cometh*, to which Hickey kills his off-stage wife Evelyn because he can't bear her support of his illusions. O'Neill's fourth act "Truth" requires Hickey's happy acceptance of a future in the electric chair and Parritt's suicide. Albee's murders are verbal, like his creations, externally killable and presumably externally renewable. George and Martha have no off-stage life but if, as Albee suddenly proposes, they have a future after this *Walpurgisnacht*, what will they talk about at breakfast? To conclude his play Albee has reverted to O'Neill's formula of inarticulate but endless talk, punctuated by the naïve poetry of sincerity.

### Nothing between the lines

By Stanley Wells

Much Ado About Nothing  
Olivier Theatre.

We have grown accustomed to theatrical updates of *Much Ado About Nothing*, usually to the nineteenth century. Alison Chitty's designs for Peter Oll's production set it firmly in the period of its composition. Towards the back of the Olivier stage four tall, adjoining *perlatok* provide a generalized clue to location - the countryside, a garden, panelling for interior scenes. Further downstage, a lower structure, before which most of the action takes place, offers a more precise image: the brick wall of a garden with a central archway; cypress walls with gates; the pannelled and tapered walls of a chamber. The setting is little more elaborate than the tiling-house was of an Elizabethan playhouse, but lacks the flexibility of their sophisticated instructions here, at every change of location the costumes figures rearrange the furnishings.

Costumes, too, are Elizabethan and muted in colouring, somewhat drably utilitarian for the men, whatever their station in life; but the women have lovely, flowing gowns, simple of line but delicately embroidered. George Fenton's music matches the period in both style and instrumentation.

There is an attempt to dress the stage. Almost every scene employs only the characters who speak. In a few set-pieces the stage is more fully peopled - Don Pedro's return

to Messina, the church scene, the finale; but there is little attempt to suggest a society with a life of its own. Comic business is slight. As Benedick, in the scene of his gullibility, Michael Gambon puffs around with a ladder from which he peers over the top of a wall at those who are talking about him. He might as well take the will to analyse for the deed, and some of us obligingly laugh. In the parallel scene for his carriage, her reactions to criticism are continuous evidence to the audience, which takes all the force out of "What fire is in mine ears...?"

In general the director does little between the lines. There are hints that Don Pedro (Robert Swann) and Claudio (Tim Woodward) share a physical intimacy which they prefer to suppress from others, especially from Don John; Benedick's recollection of her earlier fling with Benedick, which Judi Dench movingly made the motive of her interpretation in John Barton's 1976 RSC production, is here skated lightly over. The dance at Leonardo's house is stylized; the challenge to allow conversations to emerge from it; and to fade back into it, is not taken up; the effect is irrelevantly surreal. The final dance seems not an ebullient of natural feeling, but a tecked-on conclusion.

The acting style seems designed to focus on the text. Stylization is evident here, too. Characters present during a dialogue, if which they have no part fall into it as poses. Speakers make elegant but artificial use of a wide repertoire of hand and arm gestures; the director working to a theory of the historical basis of Elizabethan acting? Mostly, the lines are clearly spoken, yet all too often

they fall flat, as if the actor can summon up no inner conviction that these are the words the character would utter if he really found himself in this situation. Perhaps this helps to explain the unusual number of fluffs and missed cues, even on the second press night. The result is oddly like seeing a costume recital, or listening to an early run-through.

In the person of Patrick Drury, the laconic Don John fares better than most. Vivacity comes from performers in minor roles: Louise Rix as Margaret, John Bailey as Friar Francis, and Richard Hope as a beguiling George Seacole. Otherwise, absence of a sense of the actor's engagement with his role frequently reduces the potential impact. Michael Gambon's bluff Benedick, for all his sturdy authority, too often fails to match sound to scene: "I will be horribly in love with her" raises only a titter. Penelope Wilton's Beatrice is graceful and incisive, gaining comic effect from a quick, high-drawn smile, prolonged in a Joyce Graefellian manner when the character feels that her shafts have gone home. Brian Glover's heavily Yorkshire Dogberry is properly satisfied, if lacking in linguistic aspiration; he veers towards interpretation with a covert bullying of Verges (Leonard Fenton).

Behind this production, of perhaps beyond it - lies an inarticulate and worthwhile attempt to approach purity of presentation in an Elizabethan manner. But success in such an endeavour is unlikely unless, at the very least, the stage design permits rapid movement from scene to scene, and unless the actors can give greater comic and emotional reality to their lines than they achieve here.

## commentary

### Fragments against ruins

By Robert Hewison

David Jones  
Tate Gallery

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"I have made a heap of all that I could find." David Jones chose an apt quotation to introduce the topic of his imagination in the preface to *The Anathemata* (1952). His gloss on the line (from Nennius's *Historia Brittonum*) describes the operation of that faculty:

Part of my task has been to allow myself to be directed by motifs gathered together from such sources as have by accident been available to me and to make a work out of those mixed data.

This, you will say, is, to a sense, the task of any artist in any material, seeing that whatever he makes must necessarily show forth what is his by this or that inheritance.

True, but since, as Joyce is reported to have said, "practical life or 'art'" comprehends all our activities, from boat-building to politics, the degrees and kinds and complexities of this showing forth of our inheritance must vary to an almost limitless extent.

The kinds and complexities shown forth by David Jones's imagination are indeed various, for they are expressed in both words and pictures. The poet-painter has his place in British culture; Blake, Turner, Ruskin, Rossetti, Edward Lear, Wyndham Lewis all mixed their media, but this list accords ill with the academic division of labour. Besides mixing his media, David Jones wrote literary works of such complexity, and drew pictures so far from the mainstream of his time, that he cannot be conveniently accommodated in any accepted school. As a result, he tends to be neglected by all but a group of devoted specialists. Three-odd alms to understanding Jones's synthesizing imagination have recently appeared: a major exhibition at the Tate Gallery (now about to visit Sheffield and Cardiff); a new, or partly new, text; and an affectionate memoir by one of his devotees, William Blissett.

The exhibition at the Tate Gallery, selected by Paul Hills, who also wrote the introduction to the catalogue (144pp. Tate Gallery Publications. £7.95 paperback 0 905005 03 1, £12.00 hardback 0 905005 08 2) is the first major retrospective since Jones's death in 1974. To the non-specialist it is the most accessible introduction. Jones is best known for his contribution to the literature of the Great War, *In Parenthesis* (complete in draft 1932, published 1937), but there are only two works on display antedating 1922, and no direct visual records of the formative experience of his life, service in the trenches as a private in 1915-1918. A note by Dr Hills says that most of the trench drawings have been destroyed, although Professor Blissett's memoir describes a number seen in 1959. "Bloody art-school stuff, most of it," is Jones's reported comment.

"Jesus Mocked", of 1922 or 1923, is the first work that suggests the future author of *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*. Indeed, its association of soldierly with the Passion (one

mocks wears a World War I helmet) became a ruling literary image. The work is strikingly crude, oil paint stained rather than brushed onto a rough panel of tongue-and-groove boards, rather like the shutter of an outhouse. It was painted after Jones abandoned post-war studies at Westminster Art School, became a Roman Catholic and joined Eric Gill's religious community of artists and craftsmen at Ditchling. Hills rightly stresses that Jones was not dominated by Gill, but the figure of Christ in this powerful, and for Jones untypical, work is resonant of Gill's flat carvings.

Though Jones did not study lettering with Gill, he did learn wood engraving, and it is likely that commissions for illustration (which he had also studied at art school) besides making inevitable connections between word and image, were important for his economic survival. His preferred medium, however, was pencil and water-colour; the materials are a link back to the English

drawn for the publication of *In Parenthesis* in 1937 mark a successful return to painting, and the arrival of Jones's most distinctive manner: a dominant allegorical figure - the allegory part traditional, part the artist's own - occupies a space cramped with incident, all of it symbolic. The illustrations reflect very much the matter of *In Parenthesis*: the outbreak of the Second World War called forth a fresh series of allegorical drawings, such as "Aphrodite in Aulis" (1941), and while he continued to produce drawings closer to the landscape and still lifes of the early 1930s, and developed the making of inscriptions in the late 1940s, these densely woven literary productions are probably his best known works.

Paul Hills has coined the term "Celtic Surrealism" to describe the art of David Jones, and it neatly sums up the fusion of the linear, literary tradition in British painting with the possibilities for non-naturalistic representation opened up



Eric Gill's daughters Ellenbeth, Petra and Joan, drawn by David Jones in 1924.

romantic landscape tradition and by modernism. Hills quotes Jones's pre-war tutor at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, A. S. Hartick, who claimed that the English water-colour school had its antecedents in the suburban gardens seen from his parents' house in Brockley in Kent, but Hills also points out the contribution of Cézanne to the tradition Jones inherited. His water-colours of the 1920s passed through several subtle transformations as he evolved a style which separated out the graphic signatures of pencil line and brush stroke. The post-impressionist influence is seen most clearly here - as in "Goats on a Mountainside" (1926), where the interlacing of pencil and brush produces a shallow (but not therefore displeasing) overall design.

It comes as something of a surprise, then, to learn from both Paul Hills and William Blissett that David Jones admired Ben Nicholson most among his contemporaries. Jones exhibited with the Seven and Five Society between 1928 and 1933, at a time when both he and Nicholson were experimenting with abstract forms. Nicholson evolved from such experiments to the white reliefs of the 1930s, to the point where his puritanical abstraction could no longer accommodate Jones's (or for that matter any other British painter's) inherent literariness. The connection with modernism, however, is important, and has parallels with Jones's links with T. S. Eliot and Joyce.

On his part, Jones's pictures developed an increasingly mystical quality without passing altogether into symbolism. The floating interior/exterior light of the seascape in "Manaywan's Glass Door" (1931) conveys this mysticism; the literary element is confined to the title, a reference to a tale in the *Mabinogion*. Jones was then working on *In Parenthesis*, and the intensity of both visual and literary creation led to the mental breakdown of 1932 which stayed his hand for four years.

The frontispiece and tailpiece

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It may, of course, be wrong to suggest that there is a conflict between word and image as means for expressing a creator's imagination, although the emphasis on abstraction in twentieth-century art criticism has tended to encourage one. (It is noticeable that although manuscripts are represented, Hill's stress is very much on the "art" of David Jones. The inscriptions are introduced by Nicole Grey.) David Jones himself does not appear to have perceived any conflict.

My method is merely to be around with such words as are available to me until the passage in question takes on something of the shape I think it requires and evokes the image I want. I find, or think I find, the process almost identical to what one tries to do in painting and drawing. Having tried, to the best of one's powers, to evoke the image as much as possible, one only hopes that some other talent, someone looking at the picture, may recognize the image intended.

The limitations of that method in the literary field are demonstrated by the new David Jones text, *The Roman Quarry*. The bibliographical questions

raised by *The Roman Quarry* are complex, and will doubtless keep specialists busy. It has been compiled by two close friends of the artist, Harman Grisewood and René Hague, from the great mass of papers left unedited at his death. (Sadly, Hague also died before the book was published.) It is their argument that almost all Jones's literary output after *In Parenthesis* consisted of one long epic work that he was never able to finish. Its inspiration was the one other major event in Jones's life, a visit to Jerusalem in 1924, during convalescence after his first nervous breakdown. Part of this work appeared as *The Anathemata*: fragments of an attempted writing in 1952, other sections as *The Sleeping Lord*, and other fragments in 1974. The magazine *Agenda* has also published a portion, *The Kensington Mass*.

The difficulty is the relationship of the material in *The Roman Quarry*, and other sequences to the previously published writings. Jones's own titles acknowledge the fragmentary nature of the works published in his lifetime. If Jones was writing one single epic, as seems likely, then it would be logical to include *The Anathemata* in a reconstruction of the sequence. Practical problems of publishing economics make this impossible, but the editors have included material that has already appeared in almost identical form in *The Sleeping Lord* and *The Kensington Mass*. It may be for this reason that while Jones's publishers, Faber, have published a posthumous collection of essays edited by Harman Grisewood from the same archive, they declined to publish *The Roman Quarry*. It has been left to *Agenda*, whose editor William Cookson has consistently supported Jones's reputation, to take a big risk for a small press, and publish the work.

A close comparison between Faber's *The Sleeping Lord* and *Agenda's The Roman Quarry* is beyond the scope of this review, but it is immediately obvious that Faber's layout has made the material look much more like poetry than the mixed data in *Agenda's* version. As to the material itself, it consists of a Romano-Celtic theme linking Celtic history with events in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion, which is interwoven with three "Masses", free-form associative meditations which the notes suggest take such structure as they have from the Roman Catholic liturgy. Finally, there is a more distinct section, "The Book of Baalam's Ass", which bears at least some relation to *In Parenthesis*. (Unfortunately René Hague's notes, not originally intended for publication, almost require a commentary of their own.)

For the uninitiated, the fact that *Anathemata* was part of Jones's regular reading may be of some comfort. Even such notes as Jones himself provides, on Welsh genealogy, Romano-British mythology and historical geography, add to the insipidness of the text, where time and place are never constant. The one really graspable metaphor is Jones's soldiers grumbling legionsaries who use the technical terminology of the Western Front. Even the editors describe these sequences as showing "varying degrees of progress towards what we may call either fragmentation or coalescence". But which is it?

The publication of more of any significant writer's oeuvre is of course to be welcomed, and *The Roman Quarry* will bring delight to such specialists as William Blissett. Professor Blissett first wrote to Jones in 1934, and first met him in 1959; thereafter regularly visiting and corresponding with him. These encounters he would write up afterwards. It is plain that, like several academics whose subjects are still living, Blissett "adopted" David Jones. There is nothing wrong in that, and it adds a

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# Honouring the historian

By Alan Bell

THOMAS PINNEY (Editor):  
The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay  
Volume V: 1849-1855. Volume VI: 1856-1859

484pp each volume. Cambridge University Press. £40 each volume.  
0 521 22749 6  
0 521 22750 X

These last two volumes of Macaulay's collected letters see him at the height of his literary fame, the first part of the *History* launched with unprecedented success and the second being prepared to even greater public anticipation and eventual critical and commercial acclaim. In spite of this literary glory, increasing ill-health, belied by his robust appearance, prevented Macaulay from enjoying his public reputation to the full. He could privately relish his penance (the first in have been conferred for literature, and literary earnings made the £800 of fees and expenses easy to bear), but he was unable to take scarcely any part in Lords' business: the honour was deeply satisfying, unexpected but none the less appropriate, and eagerly accepted.

Thomas Pinney's edition can be read almost as a chapter of publishing history as the production figures and publishers' statements for the *History* are chalked up - a 15,000 order (June 1855) raised to 25,000 by October, and five-figure cheques from Longman on account for the second part of the *History*. Its success was universal, most unexpectedly in the United States, where to Macaulay's genuine surprise "I am as much puzzled as pleased. For the book is quite insular in spirit. There is nothing cosmopolitan about it." The first two volumes enjoyed great and immediate reputation. There was opposition, to be sure: Croker's predictable attack in the

*Quarterly* was denounced as "a mere succession of nitritals, blunders and mere's tests", and a word to the editor of the *Edinburgh* with a few useful factual corrections was enough to see the old opponent off the field. More troublesome, perhaps, were the desultory debates with private critics: a long correspondence with the aged Bishop Phillips of Exeter, and with Samuel Wilberforce, was necessary to sort out views on Cranmer's end episcopacy, and there were a host of correspondents with ingenious solutions of the identity of "P.M.A.C.F.", "Pere Mansuete", "Cordelier Frar" present at the death of Charles II.

Such diversions were annoyingly time-consuming when an enormous amount of research was needed for the succeeding volumes, in public records and private archives alike. "Lord Spencer has invited me to run my family papers," Macaulay wrote to his sister Fanny in 1849, "a great proof of liberality when it is considered that he is the lineal descendant of Sutherland and Marlborough. In general it is ludicrous to see how some people are at seeing the truth told about their ancestors." The research work, involving visits to sites as well as documentary study, was prolonged, and in 1851 Macaulay told Sir Charles Wood that "I do not think that I can justly be accused of tardiness, at least by comparison with other historians." Robertson, he reminded Wood, had spent ten years on *Charles V*, working from printed sources alone. Macaulay was totally absorbed in his work, darning a routine archival enquiry to the London Guildhall "1689" instead of 1855, and leaving it unsigned. It was an absorption that was to pay ample dividends.

These researches were pursued alongside strenuous re-readings of the classics. "A great quantity of execrably bad Latin" was put away in 1852, and in 1855 "a most pleasant month of mere literary idling and luxury" included the whole of Photius and many Ptolemy

sources, and all Cicero's philosophical writings. Volume V of the *History* could now be taken at a more leisurely pace, whatever the public might demand; and the leisure had been well earned.

Public business continued, too, as far as declining health allowed (his condition necessitated a move from Albany to Climpden Hill, where he might "respire freely"). Edinburgh made up for its previous rejection of its eminent former member by begging him to resume the seat, even on the understanding that he would take little part in parliamentary life. The offer of reparation for this "flagrant instance of the caprice and perverseness of even the most intelligent bodies of electors" proved impossible to resist, although Macaulay (dosed with "calomel" enough to set three bilious mammoths to rights) could not even stend the Declaration of the Poll. "To be elected, as I was elected, is certainly a great honour," he wrote to Broughton; "To sit is as certainly a great bore." Three and a half years were to see him applying for the Chiltern Hundreds, local honour satisfied, and the member's public ambition long since diverted into prosperously fulfilled literary channels.

Opulence enabled him to bear his fame easily, even when it led to his eccentricities being the subject of published comment, or to his being pursued by the dunning of a mad uncle, or finding himself at the mercy of bores at Clifton. "Nothing is so intolerable as a watering-place idler who, because he is weary of his own company, pesters others with it," he wrote of one conversationalist in the tent and of another almost to have been the author of *The Prelude*. (Macaulay felt it was but *The Excursion* again, "weaker and more tedious." My *Novel* was much more enthusiastically received.)

As triumph succeeds triumph in Macaulay's life, it is balanced by further failures in his friend Ellis's. But however unsuccessful Ellis may seem, he can still conjure from Macaulay's solicitude but never pat-

ronizing pen the best letters he wrote outside his family circle. Joint holidays are planned, with Ellis tactfully allowed to make a contribution for "tubs and towels"; public appointments are frankly sought for this friend of such high but unfulfilled early promise, very much down on his luck "in this capricious lottery of life". Ellis is cheered on in his anxieties, urged not to "mask the evil ten times as great as it is by moping and pining and eating his heart", invited in sprightly Latin prose to taste the first cucumbers and speckled eggs of the Spring, and favoured with some of Macaulay's freshest correspondence, as when the rogue publisher Vizetelly's piracy of Macaulay's speeches (which made an authorized and corrected edition urgently needed) produced some diatribes in imitation of Pope against Cuill.

The family circle remained all-important. It is sometimes threatened with diminution, as when Margaret Trevelyan, the beloved niece Baba, marries Sir Henry Holland's son (it turned out to be a welcome addition), but sometimes finds renewal in the congenial company of the rising generation. George Otto's career had been watched with interest, even while he was at Harrow and especially as he rose to fame at Trinity. The young Trevelyan soon came to be favoured with some of the intellectual and scholarly letters hitherto reserved mainly for Ellis. Macaulay could take a pride in his nephew's achievements, but even they could not make up for his inevitable disappointment at the boy's father's return to India as Governor of Madras, with the knowledge that the beloved Hannah would soon follow her husband out East. "I heartily wished when Stephen's hearse passed through [Hyde] Park on Friday that I could change places with him," he wrote to Ellis late in October 1859. Before the year was out Macaulay was dead, leaving the fifth volume of the *History* to be published posthumously, and his biography eventually to be written by the nephew whose prom-

ise he had long discerned.

This pair of volumes brings Professor Pinney's primary edition to its conclusion, with a full list of Macaulay's writings and a splendid 177-page index to round it off. As in the previous volumes, the textual work is excellently done, readings and datings are confidently and efficiently managed, and elegantly presented. The annotation is thorough and resourceful, resisting any temptation to discursiveness, its quality showing particularly in obscure examples, such as the use of census records for the age of a minor Trevelyan connection who died young, or in a helpfulness that can provide a set of answers to the examination paper on Sir Charles Grandison which his niece Baba was to set her newly married husband before he could be declared "worthy of a degree in Richardsonian learning".

Macaulay's manuscript Journal has been placed under contribution, confirming dates, amplifying allusions, and sometimes corresponding the bland courtesies of the correspondence (Edward Everett's *Orations and Speeches*, elegantly enough acknowledged to their author, are assessed as "a little more gaudy and interjectional than is to my taste - Ah and Oh"). The little we are shown of the Journal here makes us look forward to the more eagerly to the edition that Dr R. Robson has in preparation. Mr Pinney's *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay* has added to Macaulay's reputation as a letter-writer far beyond what the extensive but oddly mangled extracts of Trevelyan's biography have led us to expect, and the Journal is needed to complete the corpus of his writings. The Cambridge University Press will again earn our gratitude if they are able to publish it with the taste and skill which (and Western Printing Services Ltd as printers) have devoted to the production of the *Letters*; but with these two volumes priced at £40 each (concluding a series that began in 1974 at £10.50 a volume) one scarcely dare think what comparable volumes of the *Journal* may cost when they eventually appear.

## Heavy going at the House

By Stephen Koss

NANCY E. JOHNSON (Editor):  
The Diary of Gathorne Hardy, later Lord Cranbrook, 1866-1892  
Political selections  
908pp. Oxford University Press. £48.  
0 19 82622 5

One of the vertebrae of nineteenth-century Toryism, who ultimately qualified as a sort of slipped disc, Gathorne Hardy commanded respect some may be said of his voluminous diaries, from which Nancy E. Johnson has culled "political selections". The originals, running to twenty-one quarto volumes, may be consulted at the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office. "About two-thirds of the manuscript text has been omitted" from this published version "by the removal of references to the weather" (with which the diarist habitually prefaced nearly every entry), "birthdays, visits to family and friends", travel itineraries, and the like. What remains is none the less staggering in quantity, though - like the man himself - rather humdrum in quality.

"GH", as he is economically tagged by the editor, tried unsuccessfully in 1847 to succeed his father as Liberal MP for Bradford. Nine years later, abandoning his legal career, he had better luck at Leominster as a Conservative. He held that seat unopposed until 1865, when he defeated Gladstone in a dramatic contest at Oxford. By his own reckoning, however, he did not embark upon his "official life" until 1858, when he was appointed to an under-secretaryship in the second Derby government. Then, in 1866, he entered the Cabinet and began his "journalising" in earnest.

Sir Robert Ensor identified Gathorne Hardy as "one of the best debaters and most esteemed figures in parliament". John Morley, writing as Gladstone's biographer, paid him tribute as "a man of sterling character, a bold and capable debater, a good man of business, one of the best of Lord Derby's lieutenants". More recently, Peter Marsh has described him as a worthy exponent of Disraelian precepts who gradually "lost his fighting nerve". Ironically, these diaries fail to do justice to such attributes and tend to obscure them. Gathorne Hardy, especially after his elevation to the peerage as Lord Cranbrook in 1878, emerges as an awkward and insecure figure, lacking both the eloquence noted by his contemporaries and the driving ambition discerned by the editor.

A self-styled connoisseur of parliamentary oratory, Gathorne Hardy scored those like Gladstone and Harcourt who addressed the House of Commons "on stilts", those like Bright and Dilke who indulged in "airy declamation", and even Disraeli, whose "speeches were occasionally 'too low & fine spun' to be intelligible to his own side. About his personal performance at Westminster, he was disarmingly modest. On August 3, 1866, for example, he "tried once" and evidently not too strenuously "to catch the Speaker's eye but failing went to my office & did not return". On May 10, 1877, having taken "some pains to prepare to speak", he was almost relieved to be denied the opportunity: "There are so many desirous to take part in the debate that one must make room or it will never end".

He was flattered to be classified among "the first men of the country" by the King of the Belgians, though he knew it to be of course mere "compliment". Being "happily conscious of many defects", including an embarrassing inability to converse in

French with foreign dignitaries, he "smiled" at his unflattering portrait in the *Spectator* (April 3, 1869): "I am sure I feel my incompetency in many respects & it does no harm to have one's attention called to what others see more clearly. I must try & mend!" Likewise, there was "nothing to irritate" in a *Daily News* article (December 13, 1872) that put him "somewhat low in the intellectual scale", at the same time tipping him for "a position in the party to which I have little claim".

The *Daily News* believed that Gathorne Hardy would succeed Disraeli as the Conservative leader in the Lower House. Others nursed the same expectation, but Disraeli decided in the end that Sir Stafford Northcote had better claims owing, among other things, to "more constant communication with the House and its members on a variety of subjects". The Queen never tired of declaring that, in this instance, Disraeli had made a mistake. Gathorne Hardy accepted no decision "without reluctance", more on account of "going as before in all respects". A family man, who preferred to dine at home - he "got no dinner" on March 16, 1876 "as it was impossible to leave the house except for a few minutes to swallow a basin of soup" - he saw no reason to suffer any longer the nocturnal drudgery of the Commons. As Secretary of State for Lords, he gratefully transferred to the obverse, where he was amused to observe, "a long sitting" was one that lasted "until 6.45".

He bore no grudge against Northcote and thereafter accustomed himself to Salisbury as he had previously come to terms with "an unscrupulous man, a Disraeli". In the course of a long career he embraced Bright as a defender of the constitution, muted his antagonism to Chamberlain, and perceived Balfour's merit and Camp-

bell-Bannerman's steadiness. Initially distrustful of Lord Randolph Churchill, whose "smoking... seems to me excessive & must be injurious", he eventually cooed on December 18, 1886 that the firebrand "shows plenty of ability"; days later, to Gathorne Hardy's "amazement", Churchill perfunctorily justified those first impressions.

There was one public figure about whom Gathorne Hardy never wavered. Gladstone was "courteous & gentlemanlike" towards him in the House, and a stimulating dining companion as a fellow member of Grillions. But, echoing Kingslake, Gathorne Hardy considered him "a truly good man in the worse sense of the word", a "good wise man who does bad actions & foresees nothing", "the destroyer of his country", a "shameless old falsifier of facts", a "great impostor", and an "old man... lifted on high by rebels & traitors". This furious detestation was shared by the Queen, who admired Gathorne Hardy and showered gifts upon him; books about Prince Albert which were treasured as "heirlooms"; royal portraits; a box of bonbons for his grandchildren, and an engraving of the Jubilee procession.

This book abounds in such catalogues, affording some illuminating glimpses of parliamentary routines. Although useful for dating meetings of the Cabinet and for identifying ministers in attendance, it seldom reveals attitudes, those of the diarist included. "The Cabinet had nothing very special", recorded Gathorne Hardy on March 11, 1877.

"We had a Cabinet fully attended & settled many points yesterday", noted on December 1, 1889, "but none that I need put on record". Often, the information imparted is trivial and might well have been excluded, along with the weather re-

ports: "Thilors is dead, an event in France".

The diaries have been assiduously annotated, although the reader is assumed to have ready access to a copy of A.E. Gathorne-Hardy's "memoir", published in 1910. For elaboration and divergent points of interpretation, the editor directs us to *Hansard* and to various secondary works; these include not only Lord Blake's biography of Disraeli, but also the appropriate volume of Burke, not only *The Times*, but also the *Kentish Gazette*. A meticulous index helps to identify various names fleetingly mentioned in the text and to distinguish, say, John Morley from the 3rd Earl of Morley. A few minor participants appear incorrectly in both places (Sowler for example, is cited as "Powder"). And, arguably, the undisclosed names of the victor in the 1890 by-election at Carravon Boroughs is more significant than the fact that the Conservatives had previously captured the seat by a small majority; he happened to be David Lloyd George.

"A political diary is the most dangerous art form an author can adopt", according to Barbara Castle. Neither as a politician nor as a diarist did Gathorne Hardy take risks. "Why wash our dirty linen in public?" he asked his journal in 1885. "One cannot reveal history yet," he replied in 1887 to a solicitation from the editor of the *National Review*. A firm believer in "civility", as he persistently misapprehended it, Gathorne Hardy betrays no Gladstonian intensity of emotion or depth of commitment. He is equally far removed from any trace of Disraelian wit unless one counts his jest that the proposed tax on matches in 1871 was a "misdeed on a slash [flat] has gone out like a Lucifer". On balance, it is the tediousness of the parliamentary procedure - and the heaviness of procedure - and the intractability of problems - that he communicates most vividly.

## Power to the self

By Alastair Fowler

STEPHEN GREENBLATT:  
Renaissance Self-Fashioning  
From More to Shakespeare  
321pp. University of Chicago Press. £12.  
0 226 30653 4

No doubt all the classic problems of literary interpretation beset us as often as we attempt interpretation. (How understand parts before wholes? Wholes before parts? Genres before exemplars? Exemplars before genres?) But no one would deny that differences between interpretation of old works to resolve. This being specially hard to resolve. This is in part because few uniformities between past and present can securely be taken for granted.

Some have despaired of the enterprise and come to regard past literature as blocked off by a great hermetic divide. Fortunately, however, literature has many formal structures and conventions - especially generic conventions - which together make up a remarkable aggregate of systems of redundancy, or mutually confirming codes. It has, that is, an integrity that rises far above time's ravages (and one might expect. Moreover (and this is a point missed by the early hermeneutic theorists), literature's various redundancy systems differ both in scale and in phase of historical change. Consequently, if the conventions of an old work are attended to with scholarly care, it may have much to say to us that we could not have invented for ourselves.

All the same, the difficulties of interpretation remain formidable. Can we even be sure that writers of the past were as like ourselves as modern writers are? Not at all: they may have been just as strange - and in different ways. So, in interpreting, we fall into the ways of bad biographers, uneasily aware that they should avoid "the thought" and "the felt" (since their subject's interior experience is inaccessible), and who write instead "perhaps he thought".

In our ignorance of the interior life of old authors, we invent anything we like. Or else we pretend to invent nothing; in that case taking over the inventions of previous scholars. With living writers there are occasional restraints on interpretation. But the ancient dead just go on lying there as if we had told the truth. *Martin non mardent*. We are safe from them: they never pick us up in the correspondence columns of journals yet extant. They are what we want them to be.

Yet almost the one thing, we can count on about our ancestors is that their feelings and interests were different. If we went back far enough, we should certainly find some *Pithecanthropus ulterratus* not even interested in breaking into the hermetic circles. But then, come to think of it, some people today are not interested in that, either. And this is the other thing we know about past people: that they all shared our belief in the doctrine of unchanging human nature.

Between these poles literary criticism veers, according to the change of the decade, or the moment. Currently, a few critics seem to work on the assumption that men have always been pretty much the same; so that no endeavours of scholarship - no constructs of former speciality - can possibly take us further than simply reading, as if the work had been written today. As Stephen Greenblatt puts it, "we need... bring nothing to the text but ourselves". Others believe that sixteenth-century people (say) were so different that we have to devise constructs of them, and that almost any construct is likely to be nearer the truth than mere assumption of similarity. But paradoxically, those who exaggerate the differences may think it useless to psychoanalyse earlier motivations, and consequently rely perforce on an outmoded psychology in which the differences were "levelled". Both approaches embody truths: mixture and balance are indispensable.

Both emphases appear in the American vogue for studies of self-fashioning. Stemming from Neoplatonic studies such as Wittkower's *Transformations of Minerva*, and Thomas Greene's *The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature*, this has grown in very different directions, represented for example by Arnold Weinstein's *Fictions of the Self 1550-1800* and William Kerrigan's *The Articulation of the Ego in the English Renaissance* (which argues in psychoanalytic terms for a distinctive Elizabethan otomany).

For the most part, Professor Greenblatt belongs with those who make Renaissance man in our own image. In fact, he thinks that Renaissance man is almost more like ourselves than modern man: "We sense... that we are situated at the close of the cultural movement initiated in the Renaissance and that the places in which our social and psychological world seems to be cracking apart are those structural joints visible when it was first constructed." He practises, however, a "cultural or anthropological criticism" (paying homage to Clifford Geertz); so that for him it is perhaps not exactly human nature that we share with Renaissance man (Professor Geertz has said "There is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture"). What may be shared, it seems, is rather "ideology". Greenblatt means to break the barrier between sociology and literature, and claim self-fashioning as a subject for literary criticism.

Culture does not exist independently of its concepts, either. Think of the Renaissance that once existed for Burekhardt or Symonds: an age when man's spiritual individuality was realized; when antiquity was reborn; and when the beauty of nature was discovered. In twentieth-century concepts, far more stress is placed on economic and socio-political factors. Digressing these various Renaissances, Greenblatt seems to try for a moderate if not conservative temperance. He goes back, for example, to Burekhardt's idea of the state as a work of artifice (*Kunstwerk*), and of the individual as a comparable work.

But these ideas are given a new twist by concentrating on motives of power. Even by contemporary standards this is carried quite far. The characteristically Renaissance activity, "self-fashioning", is for Green-

blatt primarily a matter of power. It was characteristic also to conceal such an emphasis, more or less, to social historians. Tyndale's successive voluntary exiles "signal a pattern of rejections in Tyndale's life. Man must live outside the institution".

No more of Burekhardt's talk of merging upper and middle classes; in the revised Renaissance there is only exploitation. Greenblatt's chosen theme (or fiction) is not in itself implausible. The subject will bear to this extent like nature, that it will yield an answer to any question put to it. When Greenblatt chooses to ask about exploitation of the Third World, Tudor culture must learn the new term and come as clean as it can.

These case studies of self-fashioning are concerned not merely with the growth of individualism, but with typical strategies adopted to defend or expand the self in political and social relations. The early chapters have to do with crises of authority and with the "decentralization" of church and state: a scene in which "the role of the mind... in the creation of oppressive institutions" began to be grasped. More and Tyndale are portrayed as searching for new bases of control, but dying in the attempt. A case is made for *Utopia* as self-criticism: as an expression of More's longing to cancel his own identity. These chapters make some interesting observations about the comparative externality of early Protestant attitudes, for example.

One hesitates, however, at the sociological recapitulation of these emotions "deeply embedded in the nation's social and psychological character". It is doubtless true of More, Tyndale and Wyatt that "taken together, they may be said to enact the momentous ideological shift in early modern England from the consensus *fidellum* embodied in the universal Catholic church to the absolutist claims of the Book and the King". But surely that was only part of the change in self-fashioning. Various relativists had their effect; and even changes in consciousness were in train, fostered over longer periods than the political clock measures. Greenblatt's method is hardly calculated to explore these. Sensitive as he is to variations in authenticity or

identity, he frankly uses his exemplary people to illustrate "patterns" already known, more or less, to social historians. Tyndale's successive voluntary exiles "signal a pattern of rejections in Tyndale's life. Man must live outside the institution".

Professor Greenblatt avoids the extreme forms of psycho-history; he several times draws back from psychoanalytic explanation. Nevertheless the connections he follows are emotional rather than intellectual. This leads him to notice similarities rather than differences between his subjects. Even More and Tyndale, who are repeatedly contrasted, in the end exhibit "significant similarities".

From men of religion and affairs, who wrote on illocutionary literature of ideas, Greenblatt turns to poets. He writes with some subtlety on the satires of Wyatt, who indeed suits his range of interests perfectly. Wyatt the diplomatist can be shown at the court of Charles V. literally enacting the ceremonies of the power game. And perhaps he really felt a close analogy between diplomacy and trade and love, as his age conceived them: "it posited a severely limited substance (power or wealth) and hence assumed that the gain of one party is inevitably the loss of the other".

Again, there is plausibility in the idea that personally embodied power dominated the court of Henry VIII. This has implications for Henrician literature. Greenblatt carries conviction when he affirms the dangerous reality of Wyatt's songs - unnecessarily, so far as C. S. Lewis is concerned, who called them not "light-hearted" but "passionate", which is almost the opposite. Up to a point, it makes sense to think of the songs as moves in a deadly competitive love game "in which idealism and cynicism, aggression and vulnerability, self-revelation and hypocrisy are tansely conjoined". Ambiguity would be a *sine quo non*. And perhaps Wyatt's ambassadorial experience fit his sensitivity to literary reality of Wyatt's songs - unnecessarily, so far as C. S. Lewis is concerned, who called them not "light-hearted" but "passionate", which is almost the opposite. 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least, although with mixed results. To some, indeed, his interpretation of the Bower of Bliss will no doubt discredit his way of using literature. For he subtly moulds the story (Acrasia was not "tightly" bound, for example), and slight distinctions laboriously achieved by modern critics (who have after all studied Acrasia's allegorical significance fairly extensively). Greenblatt prefers the broad terms of the Romantics: Acrasia offers "not simply sexual pleasure... but self-abandonment... the end of all quests." Hence Guyon's destruction of her Bower is a taking of power; he purchases his more civilized self at the cost of a "painful sexual renunciation." In this myth of pudent self-control, "excess" is defined not by some inherent imbalance or impropriety, but by... the exercise of restraining power." In a word, the destruction of the Bower means repression.

Spenser might protest that divine law is what defines excess. But Greenblatt seems not much interested in Spenser's meaning. For Spenser loved power, and would have delighted himself about it. Fortunately there are other sources of meaning. Freud compared civilization's behaviour towards sexuality with that of the colonial powers to subject populations; so that the destruc-

tion of the Bower is a symbol of colonialism. Or, in a sense it is. Greenblatt offers "three reiterations by the culture of important elements by the destruction of the Bower... the European response to the native cultures of the New World, the English colonial struggle in Ireland, and the Reformation attack on images." These are not exactly offered as meanings, but as implementations of the sociological programme. They "incorporate the work of art into the texture of a particular pattern of life". Only, the pattern is not a Renaissance one. It is a familiar twentieth-century pattern: a pattern we are now conditioned to see. The nature that Burckhardt had Renaissance man admiring, Greenblatt has them destroying.

To incorporate Guyon's spoliation into real life, the method is to collect "essential elements" in it shared with actual enterprises of its time. Thus the voyage of approach, the idleness of the Bower, the "pointlessness" of its life: all are ingeniously matched with the New World of the travel books. Some essential elements, however, prove a little recalcitrant. Early voyagers described on artless, not an artful world. And cannibalism and incest can only be detected at the Bower (in Acrasia's sucking of Verduant's spirit "through

his humid eyes") by the most solemn elevation to sociology. Application of literature to its moral equivalents in life is a necessary part of criticism. But the equivalents need to be arrived at in the light of a work's original meaning, not merely of our own predilections. Greenblatt too easily sounds the watchword "ideology" and occupies the safe ground of modern stereotypes - colonial exploitation and the rest. To him, ideology is "that principle of truth toward which art forever yearns". But to those less sure that this is what art yearns for, it may well seem against the grain of literature to use it in so facile a way.

It is tempting to base the study of a past culture on structures of power, since these reduce man to basic motives: this aspect of his nature is enduring at least, if not specially human. But much of culture has little to do with power. Even the moral and theological debates that troubled the sixteenth century were not merely power struggles; they had real substance. Certainly Renaissance preoccupations have to be interpreted afresh from a current viewpoint; and sociological as well as psychological explanation is likely to play a part in this. But we need to beware of exploiting issues away, until only adjustment to structures of power remains.

## A liking for lucre

By George Watson

JOHN McVEIGH:  
Tradefull Merchants  
The Portrayal of the Capitalist in Literature  
221pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£11.95.  
0 7100 0729 9

Capitalism is not much loved by literary intellectuals, at least as a theory. It is a symptom of their distaste that they should use the word at all; what economic system, after all, does not depend on the control and management of capital? Nobody who admires a competitive economic system based on the quest for private wealth would call it that; and in the United States, where the system is widely admired, the word is seldom heard outside universities. John McVeigh, a lecturer in the New University of Ulster, uses the word plentifully in its familiar if tendentious sense, and has been content to write a book that makes a good many usual assumptions, like "the violent replacement of feudalism by a capitalist social order" that allegedly occurred in sixteenth-century England. But then the whole book has such a well-worn air about it, seemingly undisturbed by recent and subversive historical speculation that it comes as a surprise to find that end-notes and bibliography contain a wide and far-ranging reference to recent scholarship, both literary and historical.

The book is unswervingly a survey. Beginning with Langland, who put Lady Lucre into *Piers Plowman* to disparage fraudulent gain rather than gain as such - a sensible view, surely, for Langland to take - McVeigh conducts the reader down a long tunnel lined by such predictable figures as Defoe, Pope and Carlyle, until he arrives at the present. Much of the prose has the breathless air of something written off the top of the head, and McVeigh, strenuously unpolemical, almost never engages with the views of the scholars he cites in his last pages. It is still nice to see Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* taken seriously, as seriously as it has been taken at the National Theatre; and interesting to hear it suggested that Shakespeare's Antonio,

considered as a merchant of Venice, was to stand-offish to "last a month in the demanding and demeaning real business world". "De-neaning", however, shows how little McVeigh is reconciled to his subject. Even his title, which is taken from a dazzling sonnet in Spenser's *Amoretti*, does not stir him.

Ye untrifling merchants, that with weary toil  
Do seek most precious things to make your gain...

Merchants remain of remote, anthropological interest to him, though there must be one or two at the end of his street. If he is aware that others have found romance in commerce, it is not an intuition he ever looks ready to share. He reminds one of fashionable folk a hundred years ago, murmuring deprecatingly: "In trade, my dear..."

Nowadays it is a matter of understandable concern, in the inner corridors of the Department of Education and Science, that a literary education should foster so easy a disdain for the economic system that is the nation's life. Britain needs in order to flourish and even to survive. The academic paradox here is acute. Universities, not least their literary departments, are sustained on the taxes levied from the tradefull merchants for whom McVeigh feels so lofty a distaste. He needs them more, at a guess, than they need him. But there is a less familiar point to be made here: that art, too, is commerce. Authors write to sell. A poem, play or novel is a commodity; not solely that, but still emphatically that. McVeigh speaks remotely of Smollett's interest in the commercialization of literature, but he is nowhere concerned with literature as a commodity in itself. Oddly enough, hardly any literary historian is, and yet such great artists as Shakespeare and Dickens both wrote with an eye to profit, and in the event their works proved highly profitable. George Eliot's literary accounts are impressive evidence, together with her correspondence, that great minds like big money. An author is himself a tradefull merchant, and needs to be. Great art is saleable. And when our finest playwrights and novelists speak of commerce and the creative excitement it can induce, they speak of something which, in the exercise of their own art, they most intimately know.

## The sceptical scene

By Jean Wilson

SUKANTA CHAUDHURI:  
Infirm Glory  
Shakespeare and the Renaissance Image of Man  
221pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press. £12.50.  
0 19 812801 0

In this well-written and illuminating book, Sukanta Chaudhuri seeks to relate Shakespeare's writing to the philosophical scepticism expressed by other contemporary writers. After surveys of scepticism as manifested in Corniellus Agrippa, Rabelais and Montaigne, he traces it in the works of the neo-platonists Nicholas of Cusa, Ficino and Pico; the Humanists Erasmus, Colet and More; and the theologians, starting with Aquinas and other Scholastics, and going on to the Protestants, principally Luther and Calvin. A long chapter examines manifestations of scepticism in some works of Sidney, Sir John Davies, Phineas Fletcher, Raleigh, Greville, Bacon, Burton, Spenser and Donne, and then the latter half of the book applies the insights of the previous chapters to Marlowe and to both Parts of *Henry IV*, *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and to the Last Plays. An epilogue looks forward to Milton.

Professor Chaudhuri apologizes in several places for the extent of his reiteration of what may be to many of his readers familiar material, but this is

in fact one of the most valuable aspects of his book. In its survey of an important element of Renaissance thought, and its firm and humane concentration on the central figures in the plays with which it deals, it provides an admirable example of the book which may profitably be given to undergraduates: one which places Shakespeare firmly in the context of his age, and yet pays close and scholarly attention to individual texts; and which, by its avoidance of unnecessary footnotes, but which takes due notice of the works of other scholars.

The book isn't strikingly original, and there are many points where one would wish to take issue with the author (and with OUP - it is clumsy to put translated quotations in the text and the originals in footnotes; why not include both in the text?). Chaudhuri over-simplifies Spenser; ignores the fact that Britomart's anacresis is at least as important as Britomart the virgin; under-values Marlowe's *Edward II*, and is shaky on *Four's*; and generalizes Ophelia (has she had a mental tendency to sentimentalize Shakespeare, perhaps due in fact to his character-oriented approach) and maintains that Ariel obeyed Sycorax (he didn't - that was why she struck him in a pine tree). But it is scholarly and its most enjoyable read.

An enlarged edition of A. M. Nagler's 1958 study, *Shakespeare's Stage*, has recently been published in paperback form (127pp. Yale University Press, £4.85, 0 300 02689 7). In it, the author examines the working environment of Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists,

MATTHEW COOPER:  
The German Air Force 1933-1945  
An Anatomy of Failure.  
406pp. Jan's. £12.95.  
0 531 03733 9

I was only once dive-bombed directly by a Stuka. It could hardly miss the target - our gun-position on a bare ridge in the North African desert. The plume's descent was certainly disagreeable, as it must have been for those in London who saw a flying-bomb cut out and then swoop undeviatingly down on them. But when the smoke had thinned and the sun settled, it was evident that no significant damage had been done - except, alas, to the nerves of my sergeant-major. The event was no more than a little local disturbance, but it serves as a symbol not only of the Stuka's history but also of the whole abortive story of the Luftwaffe as it emerges from Matthew Cooper's extremely instructive analysis.

For the Luftwaffe itself, like the dive-bombing Ju 87, was designed specifically as a weapon of shock: the quintessential expression - beyond even Panzers and U-boats - of the Hitlerian Weltanschauung which, in the Führer's own words, maintained that "what the aristocratic basic idea of Nature desires is the victory of the strong and the annihilation of the weak or his unconditional subjection". Not only was the tool adapted technically to this end; the officers and men of the Luftwaffe seemed to Hitler to be imbued, ideologically, with a far purer strain of Nazism than was to be found in the distracted army and navy or even, for a variety of reasons, in the combat divisions formed by Himmler and the praetorian guard of the SS. In the prisoner-of-war cages it was always the Luftwaffe pilots, one found, who were contemptuously arrogant.

Yet the key phrase in Hitler's definition of Nature's purpose is "the annihilation of the weak". As Sebastian Haffner pointed out in his lucid study *The Downing of Hitler* (1979), all of his successes, whether political or military, were in fact achieved against weak opposition, whereas his assaults tended to crumble when they met a strong and dynamic resistance. So it was with the Stuka. In 1938, Mr Cooper notes, the General Staff of the Luftwaffe declared that "the emphasis in offensive bombardment has clearly shifted from area to pin-point bombardment", for which the Ju 87 was the designated instrument. Yet by August 1942, when my gun-position was worked over, the Stuka was already virtually obsolete. Its employment two years earlier in the Battle of Britain was so disastrous that its squadrons had to be withheld. The shock-effect, so vicious when directed against feeble or demoralized troops in Poland, or during the Battle of France, or in Russia during the early days, was easily dissipated by resolute anti-aircraft fire from the ground or by efficient fighters in the sky. This neutralization of the Luftwaffe's main strike-weapon supplies a paradigm for the catastrophic failure of the Luftwaffe itself.

More detached and more comprehensive than David Irving's *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe* (which pivots on the career of Field Marshal Milch), and more sedate in style than his own buoyant study of the German Army, Matthew Cooper's book is doubly welcome. First, because its cool maturity marks a genuine development in the capacity of a military student who can carry lightly the weight of a major theme, and secondly because in spite of all that there was a need for an up-to-date survey like this, which ranges from the early days of the Luftwaffe, is firmly anchored by good research, and is invigorated by fresh ideas. As to the failure of the Luftwaffe, by careful case-studies Cooper leaves us in no doubt that the contributory factors were both complex and simple, complex in so far as

## Bringing down the Luftwaffe

By Ronald Lewin

planning errors, conflicting personalities, material shortages, mere corruption and the enemy's mounting superiority all played their part, but simple because in the end the blame - in Mr Cooper's final words - "lies with the Luftwaffe high command, whose mode of operations disgraced its profession of arms, and, above all, with Hitler, Führer and Supreme Commander".

It was Hitler who handed over the air to Göring - corpulent, intolérant, incompetent, self-indulgent Göring: Göring who destroyed the virtual certainty of victory for the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain by inept tactical and strategic decisions; Göring who subsequently opted not to enjoy the lush pleasures of Krieharth while Udet, the Chief of his Technical Office, and Jeschonnek, the Chief of his General Staff, humbled and bungled until each of them committed suicide; Göring the *admiral* leader who alienated his pilots by a vulgarity of life-style and, least worthy of all, by his bitter recriminations and baseless accusations of cowardice. It was Hitler who so failed to mobilize and integrate the German war-economy that it was only when Speer took charge, far too late, that "the German miracle" occurred and planes for the Luftwaffe began to be produced at a rate wholly unexpected by the Allies. It was Hitler, above all, who embarked on campaigns in which the role of the Luftwaffe would be critical, but with an air force too small for it to be able to cope and, in any case, equipped with inadequate planes.

British historians tend to be chauvinistic when they look at the Luftwaffe, mesmerized by Fighter Command's heroic summer in 1940 and the various operations around what became Mare Nostrum, the Mediterranean. But Mr Cooper is surely right in devoting close attention to the Russian campaign and identifying this - apart from the day-battles near Germany in 1944 - as the Luftwaffe's real area of martyrdom. If Milch, with more intuition than Hitler, diminished for his lucid study *The Downing of Hitler* (1979), all of his successes, whether political or military, were in fact achieved against weak opposition, whereas his assaults tended to crumble when they met a strong and dynamic resistance. So it was with the Stuka. In 1938, Mr Cooper notes, the General Staff of the Luftwaffe declared that "the emphasis in offensive bombardment has clearly shifted from area to pin-point bombardment", for which the Ju 87 was the designated instrument. Yet by August 1942, when my gun-position was worked over, the Stuka was already virtually obsolete. Its employment two years earlier in the Battle of Britain was so disastrous that its squadrons had to be withheld. The shock-effect, so vicious when directed against feeble or demoralized troops in Poland, or during the Battle of France, or in Russia during the early days, was easily dissipated by resolute anti-aircraft fire from the ground or by efficient fighters in the sky. This neutralization of the Luftwaffe's main strike-weapon supplies a paradigm for the catastrophic failure of the Luftwaffe itself.

That acute analyst of the American politico-military complex, James Fallows, has coined the phrase "the culture of procurement" to describe the atmosphere of blind optimism, excessive elaboration of equipment, wrong diagnoses and pervasive wheeling and dealing which characterizes his country's military aircraft industry. In Hitler's Germany this culture was even more corrupt and, simply, sterile. Matthew Cooper is a merciless chronicler of its deficiencies. In fairness, however, he might have reminded us of our own imperfect record. Long ago, in his official history of *The Design and Development of Weapons*, M. M. Posten described the famous Mosquito as "an aircraft... completely free from official inspiration" and showed how the Hurricane, the Spitfire and the Lancaster were less the children of Whitehall and the Air Staff than of private initiatives within

firms like Hawker and A. V. Roe. (A.V.R. were refused the raw materials for the first prototype of the mauling Lancaster.) Even the American Mustang, that astonishing long-distance fighter which cleared the German skies of opposition in 1944, only emerged after much inter-necine conflict and incomprehension. Still, all these and other aircraft did emerge, to provide the Allies with a balanced force that the Nazi culture of procurement denied to the unfortunate Luftwaffe.

Explicit and exact in so many other ways, Mr Cooper may reasonably be faulted for not examining with any penetration the hidden constraint which perhaps affected the Luftwaffe most grievously. This was the range and quality of Allied intelligence, whether scientific or cryptanalytical. Ultra is hardly mentioned, yet the people at Bletchley Park were able to read the Luftwaffe's high-grade signals in the Enigma cipher more or less continuously, and quickly, from 1940 onwards. Operational plans, the movement and strength and location of units, command structures, improvements and deficiencies in equipment and so

on were thus abundantly disclosed. The Allied, and particularly the American, command of the Japanese diplomatic cipher meant that a tremendous amount of information, usually about the German development of jet-fighters, was acquired from the highly technical reports transmitted by radio to Tokyo from the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. To a degree that has still not been evaluated the staff of the "Y Service" provided an invaluable back-up by its ability to intercept and break the Luftwaffe's lower-grade codes and, with increasing sophistication, to listen in to the actual voice-communications of the pilots - as the late Aileen Clayton, a senior officer in the Service, so vividly explained in *The Enemy is Listening*. We might also have been told more about the scientific attack, especially on the technology which upheld the Luftwaffe - its central nervous system, for example, which ramified through the radar chains in North-West Europe and the Mediterranean. And what, one might ask, were the Russians doing in these fields?

The contrast which Cooper so clearly draws between corruption,

disharmony and inefficiency at the centre and the dedication of the air-crews (of whom 70,000 were killed and 25,000 wounded) makes his book in some sense a tragedy, and this is just. However rehabilitative their ideology, we can recognize at this distance the courage of men who flew to the support of doomed Stalingrad or guided those lumbering bastards, the Me 323 six-engined Giguers, across the sea to prefillable destruction during the last days in North Africa. The old Luftwaffe braggadocio has a certain pathos when it is seen against the back-cloth (re-drawn by Mr Cooper) which was sketched in 1944 by its Commander of Research Establishments, Colonel Petersen. "Were one to pen a faithful account, an objective history of the Luftwaffe's technical development since 1934, then any outsider today - or better, our descendants - would take the whole thing as satire, dreamed up by some diseased imagination. Who could seriously believe that in real life there would be so much ineptitude, bungling, entanglement, misplaced power, lack of appreciation of the truth and over-looking of intelligent ideas?"

## Ministerial methods

By Michael Howard

DOUGLAS KINNARD  
The Secretary of Defense  
252pp. University Press of Kentucky.  
\$10.00.  
0 831 1434 9

IAN F. W. BECKETT and JOHN GOOCH editors:  
Politicians and Defence  
Studies in the Formulation of British Defence Policy  
224pp. Manchester University Press.  
£16.50.  
0 7190 0818 2

Historians can seldom help statesmen to solve their problems, but they can often comfort them by showing that their difficulties are not unprecedented, much less unique. Patterns of behaviour cut across cultural barriers and persist through centuries of social, political and technological change. There can seldom have been a regime, in this country or anywhere else, where ministers responsible for managing the economy and those responsible for maintenance of defence forces have not found themselves natural adversaries. Occasionally a statesman of outstanding ability - a Colbert, a McNamara - may seem briefly to reconcile the two opposites, but the synthesis seldom holds for long. In spite of all that Marxists may say about the dependence of capitalist economies on military expenditure, treasury officials are usually the best allies of those in all countries who are working for universal disarmament.

But studies of ministers for defence are not a very satisfactory way of examining the changes and continuities in national defence policy. It is quite true, as Ian F. W. Beckett and John Gooch state in their introduction to their book, that "The situations of a Victorian and a modern politician charged with defence responsibilities remain in essence the same", and that "a modern minister such as Healey faced a very similar situation to that confronting Grey or Cardwell in seeking to reconcile competing commitments with limited resources". But the machinery for formulating and implementing defence policy, the nature of the problems confronting governments and the balance of personalities within administrations may differ so fundamentally that the roles of these individuals in shaping events are simply not comparable. Even within a single country such as the United

States over a period of only thirty years the situation may vary so greatly that a study of successive Defense Secretaries, though possessing the intrinsic interest of any series of bureaucratic biographies (Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* comes to mind) provides little more than raw material for a study of defence-policy formulation.

This is Douglas Kinnard's problem. Some of the figures that he deals with in his study of Defense Secretaries from Forrestal to Sebinger were important, and some were not, and those who were important were so in very different ways. Forrestal was not a key figure in the Truman administration, and he was destroyed by his inability to impose a common policy on three quarrelsome and independent Services. "Engine Charlie" Wilson confined himself to minor management functions under a President who was his own Defense Secretary. For McNamara the formulation of strategy and the administration of the Services were different aspects of a single managerial problem to be solved by the same techniques; though those techniques took remarkably little account of what soldiers actually had to do. Laird was a skilful executor of a policy formulated by President Nixon but had to fight hard to preserve any degree of independence from the omnivorous Dr. Kissinger. Schlesinger formulated broad lines of strategic policy and left managerial details to others. Some Secretaries had intrusive Presidencies, and some passive ones, some cooperative Congresses, and some hostile, some were supported by a militant public opinion and some shackled by a pacific one. Professor Kinnard shows, in short, how the work of the Secretary has varied with the talents of the incumbent; and though he provides no major new insights into a topic that does not lack for analysis, he has given us a useful and up-to-date guide to one of the variables in an ever-shifting scene.

Beckett and Gooch have a more difficult task, partly because they have to cover more ground, partly because they have to manage a team of eight authors. A good, clear introduction pulls all the threads together. The purposes for which the armed forces exist and their capacity to carry out Britain's diplomatic and treaty commitments; the effectiveness with which professional advice can be marshalled to guide and inform ministerial decisions; the place of the ministry in the Cabinet and the relationship of its civil head with the Prime Minister of

the day; these, they rightly point out, provide "the overall parameters" within which defence policy must always be formulated. But parameters or no parameters, there is a huge gap between, on the one hand, the position of an Arnold Forster or a Horre Belfrage (expertly treated here by Ian Beckett and by Brian Bond) who were concerned with the management of a single Service while broad issues of defence policy were settled largely over their heads; and that, on the other, of a Duncan Sandys or a Denis Healey (dealt with by Colin Gordon and Peter Naylor), powerful ministers assigned and given full backing by their premiers to formulate defence policy in the broadest sense and to bring all three Services into line. And a yet greater gap divides the task of a Grey and a Cardwell in organizing the defence of a huge Empire on a financial shoe-string, and that of a Kitchenier charged, as Peter Simkins ably shows, with channelling the unbounded enthusiasm of a nation into a single huge Continental army.

Having produced several works in this genre, this reviewer knows very well the problems that confront an editor, and can appreciate the skill with which Beckett and Gooch have done their work. The contributors have obviously all been made aware of the "overall parameters", and do what they can to relate their studies to them. But in the last resort they are, all historians more interested in their particular subject than in the general problem; and quite frankly the really excellent studies by Hew Strachan on Lord Grey, the true father of "Imperial Defence", and by Anthony Bruce on Lord Cardwell will be of greater interest to students of Victorian England than to defence analysts. For the latter, however, Professor Naylor's essay on Denis Healey will be a quite special treat. It is not often that toads have the chance to chart quite so elegantly the course of the harrow that has overrun them.

In the second edition of *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (446pp. Arms and Armour Press. £12.95, 0 85688 287 9), which has recently been published, Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott analyze the post-war development of the Soviet military, looking at the High Command, each of the five services, combat formations, and supporting agencies, and give a comprehensive account of the Soviet military-industrial complex, military training of Soviet youth, military manpower, mobilization, and the Soviet officer corps.

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## Among the ambiguities

By Clive Hart

ROY AND MCHUGH:  
The Finnegans Wake Experience  
123pp. Dublin: Irish Academic  
Press, £7 (paperback, £3.50).  
0 7165 0047 4

"James Joyce is a fashionable writer and his last book, *Finnegans Wake*, is frequently named in awe by all kinds of literati." The flat tone of the opening sentence threatens the tedium of the routine class paper. Do not be misled: this is an altogether delightful book, witty, perceptive, informative, and in its fashion well written.

Its fashion is not that of professional criticism. While *Ulysses* continues to engage the attention of the finest students of literature, few critics of stature seem attracted these days by *Finnegans Wake*. Although excellent work on it continues to appear, most is produced by writers with other kinds of backgrounds, often in the sciences. A biologist with a special interest in grasshoppers, Roland McHugh brings to *Finnegans Wake*, on which he has published extensively, a combination of intuitive sympathy, common-sense, and a willingness to work hard before expecting results. He is not in the least concerned to bring his studies of Joyce into line with received literary opinion, in which he has no interest.

The *Finnegans Wake Experience* might almost be subtitled "the autobiography of a Joyce enthusiast". With an engaging willingness to expose his ignorance, both past and present ("the name of Vico was unknown to me, but I decided that the only sensible course was to look at the philosophy shelves..."), McHugh describes his own learning process since the mid-1960s, the beginning he not only avoided all contact with secondary sources, but adopted a remarkably self-disciplined method of reading.

My technique was slightly fanatical. I was so anxious to capture the undistorted experience that on reaching page 29, where the first chapter ends, I tied a thread round the remaining pages to prevent my accidentally looking ahead. Every few months there would be a solemn undoing of the thread: I

would read a new chapter and then tie up the remaining ones. It took two and a half years to reach the end of FW.

When he felt ready to do so, he began to read published criticism and to discuss *Finnegans Wake* with other Joyceans. With succinctness and candour he gives a generally chronological account of these experiences of books and individuals. The result is an acute if also somewhat truncated critique of *Finnegans Wake* studies, with a special emphasis on the past two decades.

Properly dismissive of the free-associationists, the sexualizing charlatans who have not read beyond page 8, and the old-fashioned seekers after narrative, McHugh also ignores a number of aggressively modernist critics who have attempted to recast Joyce as an intellectual, a theorizer, a destroyer rather than a nourishing creator. He respects only those who, by prying close, unprejudiced attention to the text, are prepared to get to know it intimately, and he understands that the

magic of *Finnegans Wake* is evoked by simple means, the sensitive play of juxtaposition, antithesis, and equilibrium.

Concerned above all with texture and structure (though not in the "structuralist" sense), McHugh stresses the interrelationship of parts, both microcosmic and macrocosmic. He adopts a sane approach to the problem created by the many textual corruptions, leaving his scientific bias with a clear awareness of the fallibility of the transmission process, the quickness of authorial decision and counter-decision, and the uncertain status of the text which Joyce received, celebrated on his birthday, and tacitly approved.

I suspect that Joyce would frequently observe some secondary interpretation or enrichment resulting from the ambiguity of a misprint. Although the effect might be to damage the syntax or coherence of the primary level, he might well opt for leaving it, such was his greed for multiplicity of meanings. Who are we to challenge such decisions?

The scholar is invited to use his judgment: "An unreasonable gloss—say one that depends on a statement that Joyce misread his own handwriting—ought not to be forced down the reader's throat. Most of the allusions in FW are reasonable." In recent years McHugh has been among the foremost of Joyce's reasonable interpreters.

Now living permanently in Ireland, McHugh has turned his attention once again to etymology. Although promising to return one day to Joyce, and to do so with increased zest, he has decided that "for the present I'm giving *Finnegans Wake* a rest". While waiting, he hopes to see a further growth of the acceptance of Joyce in Ireland, a change of attitude which he expresses through an analogy which Joyce would surely have found to his taste:

Nineteenth-century guidebooks to Ireland tend to glorify such localities as Killarney, but the Burren is dismissed as a dreary mass of infertile stone. Modern guidebooks catalogue its landscape as amongst the most entralling in the country. In the same way we will eventually see *Ulysses* and *FW* accepted as natural Irish phenomena, albeit a little harsh on the body.



The Joyce centenary next year will be marked by a number of conferences, exhibitions, entertainments and other events, news of some of which is contained in the current number of the James Joyce Broad-sheet (available from the James Joyce Centre, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, price £1). A commemorative stamp is planned, and among the designs submitted is this one by Michael Klenn, reproduced in the Broad-sheet. Klenn has also designed Joycean T-shirts.

## Sapphic bliss

By Keith Walker

LILLIAN FADERMAN:  
Surpassing the Love of Men  
Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present  
496pp. Junction Books, £14.50 (paperback, £5.95).  
0 86245 028 4

Long ago, some women loved other women, lived with them, slept with them, and wrote them letters of passionate intensity. Society viewed the relationship benignly, if the women concerned were of a sufficiently high social class. Then came Krafft-Ebing and Freud, attaching labels. Women who loved women became "lesbians" and as ashamed. Society turned nasty and editors began to excise the passionate bits from their letters.

Lillian Faderman stumbled over this not startlingly original version of events when she was reading Emily Dickinson's love poems and letters to Sue Gilbert, and noticed that Dickinson showed no "guilt" and moreover that her niece, editing the letters early in this century, felt obliged to bowdlerize them. (This has always been the way of relatives, and until very recently of scholars.) With a terrible earnestness she decided to investigate the friendships of women, and this awesomely diligent work is the result.

It begins with a quick romp through works of the Renaissance which contains references to lesbians (the word, and some would say, the concept, wasn't invented till the nineteenth century), or lesbian behaviour, like Sidney's *Arcadia* Book 2, or Aristotle's *Orlando Furioso* 25, but ignoring the comic reworking of this passage in *Forie Queene* 3.1 which Faderman seems not to have come across. (Later she quotes a passage from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalinde*, apparently unaware that *Rosalinde* is Shakespeare's main source for *As You Like It*, a play which would have provided her with much useful, if complex, data.)

Faderman's first extended treatment of a work of literature is of Diderot's *Le Religieuse*. Diderot's treatment of lesbianism is said to be "infamous", not "clinically correct and sympathetic", as critics have claimed. Without anything so vulgar as a reference to Diderot's lax, or a supporting argument, Faderman knows that this is so, because Diderot was worried that his mistress Sophie Voland might be a lesbian (it may well be true that he was worried, but it's not relevant), and because he was "anti-feminist", a statement that is meaningless unless set in the context of general attitudes to women in eighteenth-century France. Later *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are "all about" the "game" of the sexes where men chase women for

the pleasure of seducing them and affecting their ruin. That's one way of looking at Richardson, perhaps, though one might suggest that *Pamela* and especially *Clarissa* also show a deeply sympathetic concern with the harrowing plight of women, a matter that concerns Faderman elsewhere.

In general Faderman darts into works of literature for what she knows she will find there, scoots it, and emerges triumphant. She seems not to be acquainted with the works of Proust at first hand, having been persuaded by Diana Barnes that Proust tells "lies" about lesbians. I suppose Barnes meant that Mme de Valpurgie is mannish and unsympathetic, and that other "jeunes filles" are flighty and frivolous. Well, that's how it often is, and Proust is not obliged to see lesbianism with Faderman as always "a bond that goes deeper than fleeting sexual passions".

Of Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* Faderman observes, with quiet satisfaction, "the major heterosexual relationships invariably end in unhappiness; the same-sex relationships are invariably happy". This Miss Prism-like note is echoed in her account of Florence Converse's *Diana Vreith*: "the novel ends happily with Enid and Sylvia in domestic bliss and in the joy of their professional success". In Henry James's *The Bostonians* Ransom carries Verena off "but his victory is Pyrrhic, and James hints that the couple will be unhappy". But James's ending might be thought to show a greater understanding of how people—heterosexual or homosexual—experience life than Faderman's romantic fantasies. Her accounts of women's "romantic friendships" from Ponsoby and Eleanor Butler ("the ladies of Llangollen") onwards, resemble nothing so much as the collected plot summaries of pulp romantic fiction except here all the characters are women.

Is there a theme in the book? There are several strands. Faderman tells of the progress of women towards equality, the treatment of lesbians in fiction and in society, attitudes towards lesbianism, the use of the feminist movement, and so on. If there is a unifying factor it is the cosy glow engendered by the belief that lesbian relationships are finer, more enduring, and more satisfying than heterosexual ones. There's much to be said for this view, but here it exists only as an unargued assumption. You can see why Faderman disapproves of works like *The Well of Loveliness*, which presents unhappy, guilty, and neurotic lesbians. She also disapproves of notions of "butch/femme" (her terms) polarities in lesbian relations, and seems to attribute bad faith to Freud for suggesting that they might exist.

The sixty pages of notes are not cited to the pages to which they refer. This means that a lot of astoundingly gathered, and sometimes interesting, information is buried.

## Domestic despond

By John Batchelor

RUTH PERRY:  
Women, Letters, and the Novel  
218pp. New York: AMS Press.  
0 404 18025 6

Ruth Perry writes with energy and anger about the relationship between the rise of the novel and the roles forced on women in the early eighteenth century. In medieval society women had work and responsibilities, in their own right, and in the early modern period they were not to be excluded from the public sphere. The growth of urban civilization had the effect of "phasing women out of the new economic structures" and by the eighteenth century women were "dispossessed of all meaningful activity

save marrying and breeding". Intelligent women were victims of the "separate, private households which have always characterized urban life" and left with nothing to do. "Love in marriage was a sop to women who in life and literature were 'idealized, set apart'". The romantic love epistolary commanded in the minor epistolary ovels with which this study is concerned leads to marriages which are in effect institutionalized tyranny.

Ruth Perry seems to find the early epistolary novel a largely despicable art-form which reflects and endorses the marital cooptations of a detestable civilization. It was a misanthropic, more space to women, and she would have been interested to have a full discussion of the one great novelist who wrote in the genre: it might also have forced Miss Perry to reconsider her thesis and take a less indignant and less simplified view of the period.

## Survivors' Songs in Welsh Poetry

By Jon Stallworthy

This is a slightly edited version of the Gwyn Jones Lecture, given at University College, Cardiff earlier this year.

When I was honoured by the invitation to give this lecture I must not imagine that an expulser might have to say that would be worth the attention of such an audience; until, remembering the days of my association with my favourite author, I again took up Gwyn Jones's *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse in English* and there—in Joseph Clancy's translation of *The Gododdin*—I found my text:

Of three hundred champions who charged on Catraeth, it is tragic, but one man came back... Of the comrades who went together, tragic, but a single man returned.

This brought to mind another text, one perhaps known to Aneirin, author of *The Gododdin*:

And there came a messenger into Job and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped to tell these...

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped to tell thee.

Whether Aneirin intended it or not, the double coincidence of the three hundred—elsewhere in *The Gododdin* defined as three bands—and the one survivor, adds a tragic resonance to his poem. Not of course that this is a narrative, although a narrative emerges from the sequence of elegies with which the poet celebrates the exploits of those who fell at Catraeth—or some of those who fell at Catraeth. For Aneirin, as a man of rank, extols the officers and gentlemen but makes no mention of the "other ranks", the infantry, whom scholars assume to have accompanied each mounted knight. He extols them not as an obituary or war-correspondent, but as kinsman and friend:

in a shining array they fed together round the wine-vessel. My heart has become full of grief for the fast of Mynyddog, I have lost too many of my true kinsmen. Out of three hundred wearing gold torques who hastened to Catraeth, alas, none escaped but for one man.

We hear that Cidno, before "the uproar of battle" took communion, but the three hundred seem bound together by the secular sacrament of the mead cup. Over this they utter not prayers but boasts, pledging themselves to deeds of valour, which they are thereby obliged to perform or to perish in the attempt.

On the night before they set off for Catraeth, we can imagine some of the company in the hall of Mynyddog, who drinks from the cup but does not join in the boasting. Instead, he sings. Perhaps, as David Jones says in the Preface to *In Parenthesis*, "He is instructed to sing... the song of the Battle of Camlann"—the song, now lost, that lies behind Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. "This tale Sir Bedivere, a Knight of the Table Round, made it to be written"—Sir Bedivere, who left the battlefield echoing Job's messenger: "I, only am escaped to tell thee."

Perhaps Aneirin sang on the field of Catraeth—as Taliesin was to sing the *Chanson de Roland*, riding in front of the Normans at Hastings, tossing his sword in the air. At all events, we know how Aneirin left the battlefield:

Aeron's two war-hounds and tough hounds, And myself, soaked in blood, for my song's sake.

His escape indicates as act of cowardice. That blood testifies to an active role in the battle, but a poet of the heroic age was not primarily a warrior. His function was to ensure that his friends did not die unnamed. He must escape: that he may tell, bear witness that what was promised in the hall was performed on the field. "Bleddig son of Eli was a wild-bore for fierceness" the son of Nwython slay a hundred

princes wearing gold torques so that he might be celebrated"; "the son of Synno (the swotsweaver foreknew it) sold his life that his glory might be told forth... because of his pledge... he charged forwards in the forefront of the men of Gwynedd."

Aneirin, of course, was neither the first nor the last Welsh poet to bear such witness. Taliesin told his listeners:

There was many a corpse beside Argoed Llwyfain; From warriors ravens grew red, And with their leaders a host attacked. For a whole year I shall sing their triumph.

And when I'm grown old, with death hard upon me, I'll not be happy save to praise Urien.

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alone and in distress, Swam o'er the sea's expanse back to his people. but the poet does not interrupt his narrative to name or praise those whom the survivor survives.

The notable exception, of course, is "The Battle of Maldon", of all Old English poems the closest in tone to *The Gododdin*. Its unknown poet knows and names his warriors, divulging their weapons, reporting their speeches, persuading us that he too had his place in their shield-wall. But if he did, and if Bryhtnoth's heartless companions were true to their boasts that they would not leave their leader's body, how did the poem come to be written? I see him at the last, taking leave of his companions and escaping.

It seemed that out of battle I escaped Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped through rammed earth and stone, By those two men whose minds lay wide, Through granite which thence war had groined.

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The accompanying manuscript draft of Moneiff's first 179 lines confirms that Owen was familiar with *The Song of Roland*, and we are left with the problem of whether the dedication was altered simply because he was dead, or whether—as I prefer to think—he had expressed himself unhappy to be associated with the chivalric tradition. Before he died, however, he had testified in the tradition of his Welsh forbears:

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"I only escaped to tell thee." But what he tells us is not what Aneirin tells us, testifying to the heroic exploits of his friends. Though Owen also speaks of o

Rotund could find, and, for a reasonable while, enjoy, his Oliver". Echoes of the *Chanson de Roland* reverberate throughout *In Parenthesis*. John Bait has a friend, the signaller Oliver, of whom we are reminded when the poet numbers among the dead

Tallifer the maker, And on the same day, thirty thousand other tanks. And in the country of Bearn—Oliver and all the rest—so many without memento beneath the tumult on the high hills and under the harvest places.

At the end of *In Parenthesis*, Jones gives Turlo, the maker of the *Chanson de Roland*, the honour of the last word:

The geste says this and the man who wins on the field... and who wrote the book... and the man who does not know this has not understood anything.

*In Parenthesis* is a difficult work. Jones called it a "writing", at once acknowledging and dodging his reader's first question: "Is it poetry or prose?" Having read it, we know the answer is "both". It has the narrative structure we associate with the novel, but its language at many points takes on the allusiveness, density, and momentum of poetry. This blending of categories, like its blending of matter ancient and modern, unsettles the reader—as, clearly, Jones meant him to be unsettled—and leaves him with the problem of how "this writing" is to be read. Some of its most attentive readers have come to different conclusions. Herbert Read found it "as near a great epic of the war as ever the war generation will reach"; a judgment John H. Johnston endorsed, though neither, I think, has satisfactorily explained how the reader's epic expectations are manipulated; confirmed and denied by Jones's modernist variations fit his form. Paul Fussell, who holds that the Great War "will not be understood in traditional terms", finds *In Parenthesis* "curiously ambiguous and inclusive... a deeply conservative work which uses the past not, as it often pretends to do, to shame the present, but really to enable it". In Fussell's view, the book is an "honourable misreading" by a "tired disillusionist". I disagree with him, but his criticisms raise crucial questions, which bear on how "this writing" is to be read, and that problem I should now like to consider.

Setting aside for the moment Jones's Preface, in which he speaks frankly and informally, as author to reader, we are introduced in the Dedication to the more hieratic intonation of the poet. Its opening words proclaim it part of the work—THIS WRITING IS FOR MY FRIENDS. Printed in capital letters and without punctuation, it looks like a war memorial and sounds like a poem.

The Dedication states the theme, which is the commemoration of the dead—friends and enemies who shared the same pains. Dedication is followed by Prologue, by the title of Part I and its epigraph—three quotations, three chords—if you like, extending and developing the echoes of the Dedication. In the Prologue, quoting from Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of *The Mabiorlog*—because that by Thomas Jones and Gwyn Jones was not then available—Jones speaks through the lips of the teller of the tale of Branwen the Daughter of Llŷr:

Evil betide me if I do not open the door to know if that is true which he said concerning it. So he opened the door... and when they had looked, they were conscious of all the evils they had ever sustained, and of all the friends and companions they had lost... and because of their perturbation they could not rest.

The same recognition of friends and companions lost, the same perturbation preventing rest, are transmitted by the title of Part I: "THE MANY MEN SO BEAUTIFUL". On the white page below of the to the silence that follows, we find the rest of Colardine's stanza taking shape:

And they all dead did lie, And a thousand thousand slay things Lived on; and so did I.

So with the epigraph to Part I, in which another lone survivor, sufferer of a



"Welsh Farm 1961", a woodcut by George Mackay, one of many engravings of the countryside which he made between 1927 and 1969. Mackay's fine technique and predilection for landscape are strikingly demonstrated in George Mackay Wood-Engraver (136pp. Gresham Books, The Gresham Press, Old Woking, Surrey, £17.50, 0 905 418 903) from which this illustration and the one on page 996 are taken. The book, which contains "all the known artistic work" of the engraver and includes several of his preparatory sketches, will be published in November this year when the Ashmolean Museum are mounting an exhibition of their collection of Mackay's engravings. The Gresham Press have also reissued George Mackay's own book on the art of wood-engraving which was first published in 1949.

like Aneirin, soaked in blood, for his song's sake:

Almost one thousand years later, in 1919, there was published a new translation of the *Chanson de Roland*. Made by Charles Scott Moncrieff, it was dedicated:

To three men scholars, poets, soldiers who came to their Ronsvals in September, October, and November nineteen hundred and eighteen. I dedicate my part in a book of which their friendship quickened the beginning their example has justified the continuing Philip Bainbridge Wilfred Owen Alas Mackenzie

The translator has been a close friend of Wilfred Owen, among whose papers an earlier form of dedication is to be found:

To Mr W.O. To you, my master in assuance, I dedicate my part in this assuance poem: that you may cover the faults in my handwriting with the protection of your name. At this time lessons are to be found in the Song of Roland that all of us may profitably learn: to pursue civility, to avoid and punish treachery and to fight uncompromising with support is withheld from us to live, in fine, honourably and to die gallantly. So I have worked and written that the song of Roland for forebears heard but Norman for bears about at Hastings may not be altogether unheard in their children's armies.

THIS WRITING IS FOR MY FRIENDS IN MIND OF ALL COMMON & HIDDEN MEN AND OF THE SECRET PRINCES AND TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE WITH ME IN THE COVERT AND IN THE OPEN AND TO THE MANY FRONT-FIGHTERS WHO ARE OUR PAINS AGAINST WHOM WE FOUND OURSELVES BY MISADVENTURE

Unlike Owen, however, he was able to reflect on the experience of the trenches for almost twenty years before putting pen to paper, and by then had come to see that experience in a wider historical context. His Preface speaks in terms of which Scott Moncrieff would have approved, of "the intimate, continuing domestic life of small contingents of men, within whose structure

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similar loss and a similar perturbation, speak:

Men marched, they kept equal step . . .  
Men marched, they had been nurtured  
together

Even a Welsh reader might not recognize the source of these lines, as *The Gododdin*, but neither will an Irish reader recognize the sources of every quotation in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Modernist writers, however, have taught their readers how to respond to this strategy and, if the author of *In Parenthesis* is a "turgid illusionist," as Fussell charges, the authors of *Ulysses*, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," and *The Waste Land* must stand indicted of the same offence — and to a greater degree, in that their allusions are culled from wider fields of reference.

Jones, unlike Joyce, assists his reader with notes, so there can be no mistaking the one message of his three preliminary quotations. They introduce the action like the voice of the chorus in Greek tragedy, and the descendants of those who died at Cricrieth once again keep "equal step":

49 Wynn, U1549 Wynn.  
Coming Sergeant.  
Pick 'em up, pick 'em up — I'll stalk within  
your chamber.

Private Leg . . . sick.  
Private Bull . . . silent.

The shift of tone — from tragic poetry to comic prose — is bold and brilliantly successful. One must not overlook the jokes: that at the expense of the most famous poem by Sir Thomas Wyatt, whose book, *Cynwne Poems*, was published in 1549 — "O1549 Wyatt" — and, more important, Jones's pun on his hero's name. Fussell misses two thirds of the point when he says that John Ball is "named after the priest who led the Peasants' Revolt in 1381." Our Private Bull, who follows Private Leg in the sergeant's roster, is sacerdotal, surely, but also ballistic and — it must be said — anatomical. When finally he comes on parade, "that silence peculiar to parade grounds and to refectories" is broken — but broken liturgically.

Captain Gwyn does not turn or move, or give any sign.  
Have that man's name taken if  
you, the veterans, Sir Jenkins.

Take that man's name, Sergeant Snell.  
Take his name, corporal.  
Take his name take his number —  
charge him — late on parade —  
the Battalion being paraded for  
overseas — warn him for Company  
Officer.

Have you got his name Corporal Quilter.  
Temporary unpaid Lance-Corporal Ancirin Merdydyn Lewis had somewhere in his Welsh depths a remembrance of the nature of man, of how a lance-corporal's stripe is but held vicariously and from on high, is of one texture with an eternal economy. He brings in a manner, baptism, and metaphysical order to the bankruptcy of the occasion.

"O1 Ball is it — there was a man in Bethesda late for the last bloody judgment."  
Corporal Quilter on the other hand knew nothing of these things.

The narrator, like his Lance-Corporal, brings a metaphysical order to the bankruptcy of the occasion. A prosaic manner is appropriate to an age all-but-bankrupt in terms of heroic and religious values, but we are reminded that some hierarchies are still observed. Lance-Corporal Ancirin — named, no doubt, after the poet — holds his stripe vicariously (like a vicar) and from on high, and his joke has a prophetic ring: "O1 Ball is it — there was a man in Bethesda late for the last bloody judgment." Ball, the survivor, will be late for the last bloody judgment attended by the rest of his platoon. The Welshman has in his depths a remembrance, but the English corporal Quilter on the other hand knew nothing of these things.

The Lance-Corporal's bardic namesake had celebrated the high-ranking heroes of the *Gododdin* in a high style. The low-ranking celebrant of a more democratic heroism, though his ear is marvellously attuned to social distinctions. As he fits a post whose first memory "was of a thing of great marvel" — a troop of horses moving to a column to the *lurking* of bugles — and who thereupon resolved "some day I shall

ride on horseback", his mounted officers are generally presented in chivalric terms. Mr Jenkins, in keeping with the lower station, is presented in gentlemanly terms — "The Squire from the Rout of Son Romano smokes McLauchlin No. 9" — and presented affectionately:

Mr. Jenkins got his full lieutenantcy on his twenty-first birthday, and a parcel from Fortnum and Mason; he grieved for his friend, Talbot Rhys [killed and left hanging on the wire], and felt an indifference to the spring offensive — and why was non-conforming Captain Gwyn so stuffy about the trebled whisky chits.

With the exception of "that shit Major Lillywhite" and one other officer, all the characters in *In Parenthesis* are presented sympathetically, including the enemy front-fighters, and those who pray for them behind the lines:

But all the old women in Bnvaria are busy with their novenas, you bet your life, and don't sleep lest the watch should fail, nor weave for the wire might trip his darling feet and the dead Karl might not come home.

Jones has his indignation, but it is reserved for a certain category of non-combatants first referred to in Part 2, entitled "CHAMBERS GO OFF," "CORPORALS STAY," this opens with the troops being lectured "in the barn, with its great roof, spring, upreaching, humane, and redolent of a vanished order". There are lectures on hygiene by the medical officer, "who glossed his technical discourses with every lewdness, whose heroism and humanity reached toward sanctity". Like the great roof of the barn, upreaching, humane, he speaks of a vanished order; as, in a sense, does the Adjutant when he addresses them on the history of the Regiment. But "The old order changeth, yielding place to new", and Jones portrays the representative of the new less kindly:

The Bombing Officer . . . told them lightly of the efficiency of his trade; he predicted an important future for the new Mills Mk. IV grenades, just on the market; he disclosed this improvised jam-tin of the veterans, of the veterans, after the Marine grenades of Loos and Leventie — he compared these elementary, amateurish, inefficient devices with the compact and supremely satisfactory invention of this Mr. Mills, to whom his country was so greatly indebted.

Long before the Bombing Officer takes his leave "like a departing commercial traveller", Jones's scornful irony has told us that he is no gentleman and has no understanding of history, heroism, or humanity. This theme is developed further at the end of Part 2, when the "Chambers Go Off" and our hero is introduced to the supremely satisfactory invention of someone in Mr Mills's line of trade:

John Ball would have followed, but stood fixed and alone in the little yard — his senses highly alert, his body incapable of movement or response. The exact disposition of small things — the precise shapes of trees, the movement of a straw, the disappearing right boot of Sergeant Snell — all minute noises, separate and distinct, in a stillness charged, through with some approaching violence — registered not by the ear nor any single faculty — an on-rushing pervasion, saturating all existence, with excitement, logarithmic, dial-timed, millennial — of calculated velocity, some mean chemist's contrivance, a stinking physicist's destroying toy.

The indictment of the scientist, delivered with all the explosive force of that rhetorical suspension is delivered more coolly and more searchingly in the Preface:

We feel a rubicon has been passed between striking with a hand weapon as men used to do and loosing poison from the sky as we do ourselves. We doubt the decency of our inventions.

Not everyone would feel the same about the decency of striking with a hand weapon, but Jones's use of the word is revealing. *Decency* is the distinguishing characteristic of the gentleman, that nineteenth-century mutation of the medieval knight. The traditions of the gentleman were

chivalric, humanistic, and tended to produce a deep distrust of science. The subject of *In Parenthesis* is the destruction of an old order — still recognizably chivalric — by a new disorder, here represented by "some mean chemist's contrivance, a stinking physicist's destroying toy".

The immensity of that destruction reinforces the tragic dignity with which Mr Jenkins's platoon prepares for what the reader knows will be its last battle. Two moments of preparation, in particular, evoke the rituals of the old order, and at both the narrator adopts the shorter line, the higher style, of poetry. As Cibno took communion and his comrades drank together before setting off for Cricrieth, so the men of No 1 section receive a sacrament — "one-third part of a loaf" and a share of the "half mess-tin of rum":

Come off it Moses — dole out the issue. Dispense salvation, strictly apportion it, let us taste and see, let us be renewed for Christ's sake let us be warm . . . Each one in turn, and humbly receives his meagre benefit. This lance-jack them from his iron spoon; and this is thankworthy

The sacrament of Last Supper is followed — as the meat-drinking in the hall of Myndyddog was followed — by the boast. *Da Great-coat*

articulates his English with an alien care. My fathers were with the Black Prince of Wales at the passion of the blind Bohemian king. They served in these fields, . . .

Da's boast, modelled on Tallies in *The Mahablog*, asserts that he was present at all the major moments in the history of the "hand weapon", from the primal war in Heaven to the Crucifixion, from Roncesvalles to Camlann. That history begins its last chapter with Part 7 of *In Parenthesis*, entitled "THE FIVE UNMISTAKEABLE MARKS". The allusion to the five wounds of the crucified Christ is balanced by the secular epigraph:

Gododdin I demand thy support.  
It is our duty to slay; meeting place has been found.

Invoking Ancirin's aid, in Ancirin's words, Jones proceeds to discharge his duty as a poet: he sings — there is more poetry in Part 7 than in any other — of the meeting at Mametz Wood in July 1916. As the platoon waits to go over the top on "the place of a skull", the first of the comrades is killed:

No one to care there for Ancirin Lewis  
Who worshipped his ancestors like a  
Who sleeps in Arthur's lap . . .

His elegiac asportions blame, but not to the enemy:  
Properly organized chemists can let  
more blistered is he that pained Troy  
and unwholesome, limb from limb, than any  
fallen at Cricrieth . . .

At zero hour, Mr Jenkins takes them over" and almost at once:  
Lurched over, jerked iron sealer over  
clamped unkindly over his chin  
nor no venalistic to this darkening  
and masked face life to grope the  
air . . .

*Vennille* — the Old French word for a helmet's movable visor — reminds us that it is the Squire from the Rout of San Romano who has fallen. But the Disciplines of the Wars are maintained "and Sergeant T. Quilter takes over". One by one, however, the "family" — Jones's word — is cut down until Private Ball finds himself, first, "alone in a denseness of haze-brush", and then shot in the leg. He crawls away, encumbered by his rifle:

Slung so, it swings his full weight.  
With you going blindly on all paws, it  
slews its whole length, to hang at  
your bowed neck like the Mariner's  
white oblation . . . Hung so about,  
you make . . . your close escape.

Once again we hear the voice of the survivor. "I only am escaped to tell these." But his story for his friends is not yet finished. He shares the wounded man's pastoral melancholia of the Queen of the Woods dispensing garlands to the dead:

She plaited torques of equal splendour for Mr. Jenkins and Billy Ciowei.

Hansel with Gronwy share dog- violets for a palm, where they lie in serious embrace beneath the twisted tripod.

The modern poet makes no distinction between official and private soldier; they receive "torques of equal splendour" — we remember the dog torques of *The Gododdin* — and German and Welshman, friend and so-called enemy. At the last, the survivor disengages himself from his rifle, as the Ancient Mariner (with whom he had earlier identified himself) had disengaged himself from his albatross. I think we are meant to infer that he, too, has expiated his guilt as a killer and, having escaped, must tell. His message, however, is not that of Ancirin and Turidil: the celebration of the heroic deed, that their names may live and their example be followed. David Jones bears witness to the death of friends who never saw the men that killed them. When Fussell calls *In Parenthesis* a work "which uses the past not, as it often pretends to do, to shame the present, but really to ennoble it", he fails to recognize that Jones's present is a battlefield on which past and future clash in unequal combat. The poet celebrates the traditional humanity of his heroes show to one another, their courage in the face of almost certain death, as he exorcises the inhumanity of the mechanistic forces brought against them.

Twenty-seven years after Private Jones of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers escaped from that stricken field, Lieutenant Alan Lewis of the South Wales Borderers lay on an operating table in an Indian hospital. Afterwards he wrote: "I surrendered to what Edward Thomas foresaw — the land he must enter and leave alone". He also wrote a poem, "Burma Casualty". In this, a wounded survivor escapes death a second time — on the operating table:

The words of a dead man  
Are modied in the guts of the living.

All our words were once the property of the dead. In the Preface to *In Parenthesis*, Jones says: "I did not intend this as a 'War Book' — it happens to be concerned with war." The message of the so-called "war poet" is essentially the same as that of his fellow poet in times of so-called "peace". He pays his dues to the living in the currency of the dead.

Emboldened by the French maxim that "all generalizations are untrue, including this one", let me suggest that the work of Celtic poets in general, and that of Welsh poets in particular, is generated by, animated by, a stronger sense of kinship with the dead than you find in English or American poetry. For reasons of temperament and history, the Welsh have always had a more tribal sense of community than the English or the Americans, and in that community the dead have their place. Over and over again we see a Welsh poet's appetite for life sharpened by an awareness of how it tasted on the tongue, sounded on the tongue, of the dead. Knowing himself a survivor — one who lives above (superior) as well as beyond the dead — he proclaims, whatever else his message: "I only am escaped to tell these".

He went alone: knew nothing; and returned  
Retching and blind with pain, and yet Alive.

IV  
Mending, with books and papers and a fur  
Sunlight on parquet floors and bowls of  
flame  
He heard quite casually that his friends  
were dead.  
His regiment too butchered to reform.  
And he lay in the lightness of the ward  
Thinking of all the dead the dark enfolds  
So secretly.  
And yet a man may walk  
Into and through it, and return alive.

The tone is Owen's: the disarming

## Beyond discontent

By Jean Wilson

BARRY GRADMAN:  
Metamorphosis in Keats  
140pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95.  
0 7108 0052 5

Keats is a poet about whom it is appallingly difficult to write without sentimentality. The circumstances of his life, the emotional intensity of his poetic achievement, the stoicism with which he met his death in Rome, make it impossible to contemplate him without being moved, and it is an adept critic who can convey his emotion without falling into emotionalism. On the whole Barry Gradman has avoided this trap, apart from the poem with which Gradman's "Protestant" ceremony at Rome. But this is the most positive thing to be said for this short and outrageously priced book.

Dr Gradman has peddled out material that would have made an interesting journal article. His thesis is that moments of metamorphosis in Keats's work follow a consistent pattern, and that by examining them we may trace both his development as a poet and the development of his ideas about poetry. He defines metamorphosis as a three-stage pattern — a state of discontent, . . . followed by some sort of lapse of ordinary

adverb "casually" setting up the reader for the shock of what follows: first, the general news "that his friends are dead"; then the more specific information that, in Owen's phrase, they had died "as cattle" — "His regiment too butchered to reform".

In another of Lewis's poems, "The Run-to", a soldier on a landing craft is

contemplating this question against the  
Always when I awake there is a little wind  
on my skin  
I sweat and cannot find any consolation  
and cannot tell  
What point in the universe I am. There is  
no remission.

Life transfers itself; the dead have  
friendships with the living.  
And the living often hold their  
profoundest loyalties with the dead.  
And most of us owe something both to the  
dead and the living, and move almost  
unconsciously between the worlds.

Ancirin, Owen, Jones, and Lewis come to us — as the four messengers came to Job — saying in turn: "I only am escaped to tell these". They come to tell the living of the dead and, hearing them bear witness to how they lived and how they died, we become aware of the paradox that it is the song and not the singer that escapes. As Auden reminds us:

The words of a dead man  
Are modied in the guts of the living.

All our words were once the property of the dead. In the Preface to *In Parenthesis*, Jones says: "I did not intend this as a 'War Book' — it happens to be concerned with war." The message of the so-called "war poet" is essentially the same as that of his fellow poet in times of so-called "peace". He pays his dues to the living in the currency of the dead.

Emboldened by the French maxim that "all generalizations are untrue, including this one", let me suggest that the work of Celtic poets in general, and that of Welsh poets in particular, is generated by, animated by, a stronger sense of kinship with the dead than you find in English or American poetry. For reasons of temperament and history, the Welsh have always had a more tribal sense of community than the English or the Americans, and in that community the dead have their place. Over and over again we see a Welsh poet's appetite for life sharpened by an awareness of how it tasted on the tongue, sounded on the tongue, of the dead. Knowing himself a survivor — one who lives above (superior) as well as beyond the dead — he proclaims, whatever else his message: "I only am escaped to tell these".

The study of Swift's writings in general has often been bedevilled by an excessive emphasis on themes and on structure — on the ideological coherence of his beliefs and the supposed orderly arrangement of his compositions. In a writer so closely ironic and so given to unsettling and aggressive mimics of disorder, such treatments have been especially reductive, and some recent discussions of the poems have imported from studies of the prose works the same limiting habits. The more enlightening commentators, however, have sensed that beyond ideology or form, important as these are, lies an almost always more important question: that of his characteristic irony. In a sense which implies a whole style of feeling and thought, A. B. England's is one of the few studies of the poems consistently animated by this assumption.

He begins with a chapter on the early Pindaric odes, which are not usually rated very highly, and which interest England for some aspects of their manner rather than for their quality. The Pindaric style, as Cowley promoted it, sanctioned certain forms of "energy" — a metaphorical boldness, a metrical emancipation from the tighter regularities of the couplet. Swift's writings are notable for their "energy" in several powerful ways, but these Cowleyan grandeur are not usually among them. Swift's temperamental recoil from most "lofty styles" finds its exception in these early poems, but their failure confirms that the style was ill-suited to him and his quick abandonment of this manner confirms that he knew it.

England's contribution is to bring out a quality of self-display in these poems, a "daring dunn" which is actually close to the satirical manner in which Swift came to excel, without actually being itself satirical. In the "Ode to the Athenian Society", for example, Swift offers an "apology" (self-justification) for those "wild excursions of a youthful pen" which took him beyond "the narrow path of sense": but it "bears an obvious relationship", England points out, to the *Tale of a Tub*'s parodic announcement that the author "thought fit to make *Method and Reason*, and the Office of its *Lacyness*". It is an interesting but unexpected illustration of the principle that Swift's mockeries often curiously resemble attitudes he took seriously. The "Ode" cultivated "impression of accidental, fortuitous growth" after all brings "ostentatiously" into play that delight in the headlong accumulation of metaphor which the *Tale* indulges through parody. (In the later parts of this chapter, England similarly and more fully compares these "serious" poems with Swift's other great satire on Grub Street, *On Poetry: A Rhapsody*.)

The process England describes is helped by the fact that the "Ode" contains satiric denunciations of things Swift normally dislikes. But a tension is created because the poem actually has some of the quality of unprepared, unarranged flux which he earlier rejected as a description of the Athenian Society. And then the poem also contains lines which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though its main drift is eulogistic: he did not then know that the Society consisted of Tubbenn hacks. And this thrusting mixture of tones is above all notable for a display of "rhetorical invention": "Swift's primary impulse was towards a kind of rhetorical bravura". In poems of this early group he tends in various ways to "overspill the limits of a traditional literary form".

Chapter Two studies satirical poems whose very satire is subverted or exceeded by a "sheer metaphoric inventiveness" which works more for its own exuberant sake than for a contribution to the aggressive logic. The poems of this group also link up with the prose satires (*Tale, Modest Proposal*), as parodies of "formal logic", whose imagery develops a fierce alternative logic of its own at the expense of both the parodied argument and the parody itself, even as these are direct agents of Swift's aggression.

At times, indeed, Swift's most cherished didactic purposes are themselves subverted by an unmoderated egotism of untidy facts. England sees this occurring especially in the "Description of a City Shower". He suggests that the distinctive form of this mock-georgic is not (as had been claimed) a reversal of some primary moral formula based on the contrast of low matter with high style, but rather an outright absence of didacticism. There is a good deal to be said for this view. It is certainly preferable to the neatly schematized interpretations of this poem and its companion, the "Description of the Morning", which are in current circulation. I think England perhaps underestimates the extent to which Swift's delight in "energy" in the spectacular mimicry of unlimited folly and vice, is in itself a punitive exuberance, albeit heavenly triumphant with imputations of guilt.

After a chapter on some poems which observe a more straightforward formal or didactic order, many full ways, but these Cowleyan grandeur are not usually among them. Swift's temperamental recoil from most "lofty styles" finds its exception in these early poems, but their failure confirms that the style was ill-suited to him and his quick abandonment of this manner confirms that he knew it.

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The process England describes is helped by the fact that the "Ode" contains satiric denunciations of things Swift normally dislikes. But a tension is created because the poem actually has some of the quality of unprepared, unarranged flux which he earlier rejected as a description of the Athenian Society. And then the poem also contains lines which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though its main drift is eulogistic: he did not then know that the Society consisted of Tubbenn hacks. And this thrusting mixture of tones is above all notable for a display of "rhetorical invention": "Swift's primary impulse was towards a kind of rhetorical bravura". In poems of this early group he tends in various ways to "overspill the limits of a traditional literary form".

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